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REGIONAL COOPERATION

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report covers the period from the second regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council to the regular session of 1992. During the first half of 1992, four of the five regional commissions held their regular sessions. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) held its forty-seventh session at Geneva from 7 to 15 April; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held its forty-eighth session at Beijing from 14 to 23 April; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) held its 24th session at Santiago from 8 to 15 April; and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) held the twenty-seventh session of the Commission and the 18th meeting of the Conference of Ministers at Addis Ababa from 20 to 24 April and the 13th meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole from 13 to 16 April. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was scheduled to meet in April 1992, but the session has been postponed until September 1992.

Until 1983, the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation included a section on major economic and social developments within the regions. Since similar information has been made available to the Economic and Social Council in the summaries of the surveys of the five regions, it was decided to exclude that section from the report on regional cooperation (see

* E/1992/100.

"Summary of the economic survey of Europe, 1991-1992" (E/1992/45), "Summary of the economic and social survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1991" (E/1992/39), "Summary of the economic survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1991" (E/1992/19), "Summary of the survey of economic and social conditions in Africa, 1990-1991" (E/1992/42), and "Summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 1991" (E/1992/52).

The present report contains four sections: section I.A deals with matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council and section I.B with matters brought to its attention; section II highlights the work of the regional commissions; section III reports on the status of implementation by the regional commissions of interregional cooperation in the monitoring and assessment of traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes in each region, as requested by General Assembly resolution 44/226 of 22 December 1989; section IV deals with strengthening the role of the regional commissions to promote subregional, regional and interregional cooperation. This subject was selected by the Council at its organizational session, upon the joint recommendation of the executive secretaries, for in-depth consideration under the agenda item on regional cooperation. During the period covered by the present report, no meeting of the executive secretaries was held in view of the ongoing restructuring process.

The annual reports of ECE, ESCAP, and ECA and the biennial report of ECLAC will provide further background information on the matters dealt with in the present report; the report of ECE on its forty-seventh session will be issued as Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1992, Supplement No. 12 (E/1992/32); the report of ESCAP on its forty-eighth session as ibid., Supplement No. 11 (E/1992/31); the report of ECLAC on its twenty-fourth session as ibid., Supplement No. 15 (E/1992/35); and the report of ECA on the 18th meeting of the Conference of Ministers and on the twenty-seventh session of the Commission as ibid., Supplement No. 13 (E/1992/33).

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I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Matters calling for action by the Council

1. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

1. The Commission approved the following four draft resolutions pertaining to the membership of the Commission for adoption by the Economic and Social Council:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Admission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a member of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has become a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in accordance with paragraph 3 of the terms of reference of the Commission,

Decides to amend paragraph 3 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Admission of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands as members of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting that the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands have become members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in accordance with paragraph 3 of the terms of reference of the Commission,

Decides to amend paragraphs 3 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Admission of French Polynesia and New Caledonia as associate members of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting that French Polynesia and New Caledonia have become associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in accordance with paragraph 5 of the terms of reference of the Commission,

Decides to amend paragraphs 2 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Admission of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan as members of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has recommended the inclusion of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in the geographical scope of the Commission and their admission as members of the Commission,

Approves the recommendation of the Commission that Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan be included in the geographical scope of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and be admitted as members of the Commission,

Decides to amend paragraphs 2 and 3 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly.

2. In addition, the Commission adopted resolution 48/3 on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons and, in its paragraph 2, requested the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to endorse the resolution and make appropriate recommendations in support of its implementation. The resolution read as follows:

"48/3. Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002

"The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

"Recalling all General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions on disability matters, including General Assembly resolution 37/52 of 3 December 1982, by which the Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and General Assembly resolution 37/53 of 3 December 1982, in which, inter alia, the Assembly proclaimed the period 1983-1992 the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons,

"Recalling also Commission resolution 207 (XXXVI) of 29 March 1980 on the International Year of Disabled Persons, concerning effective implementation and follow-up of the objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons: 'Full participation and Equality',

"Mindful that the risk of disability increases with age, and that, with the expected rapid ageing of the societies in the region, the number of disabled persons will increase substantially,

"Recognizing that while the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons has increased awareness of disability issues and has facilitated considerable progress in the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation of disabled persons in the ESCAP region, progress towards improving the situation of disabled persons has been uneven, particularly in the developing and least developed countries,

"Taking note of the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development, held in October 1991, which expressed its support for the declaration of a second decade of disabled persons,

"Noting further the recommendation of the Expert Group Meeting to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons in the Asia and Pacific Region, held in August 1991, and convened by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, that there is a need for a second decade of disabled persons to consolidate the gains achieved thus far in the ESCAP region,

"1. Proclaims the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, with a view to giving fresh impetus to the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons in the ESCAP region beyond 1992 and strengthening regional cooperation to resolve issues affecting the achievement of the goals of the World Programme of Action, especially those concerning the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities;

"2. Requests the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to endorse the present resolution and to encourage, at the global level, support for its implementation;

"3. Urges all member and associate member Governments to review the situation of disabled persons in their countries and areas, with a view to developing measures that enhance the equality and full participation of disabled persons, including the following:

"(a) Formulation and implementation of national policies and programmes to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in economic and social development;

"(b) Establishment and strengthening of national coordinating committees on disability matters, with emphasis on, inter alia, the adequate and effective representation of disabled persons and their organizations, and their roles therein;

"(c) Provision of assistance, in collaboration with international development agencies and non-governmental organizations, in enhancing community-based support services for disabled persons and the extension of services to their families;

"(d) Promotion of special efforts to foster positive attitudes towards children and adults with disabilities, and the undertaking of measures to improve their access to rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural and sports activities and the physical environment;

"4. Urges all concerned specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system to undertake an examination of their ongoing programmes and projects in the ESCAP region, with a view to integrating systematically disability concerns into their work programmes and supporting national implementation of the present resolution;

"5. Calls upon non-governmental organizations in the field of social development to utilize their experience and expertise in strengthening the capabilities and activities of organizations of disabled persons;

"6. Urges organizations of disabled persons to cooperate with government agencies in strengthening means by which citizens with disabilities may realize their full potential, and to strengthen linkages among disabled persons in developed and developing countries to enhance their self-help capacity;

"7. Requests the Executive Secretary to assist, subject to available financial resources, member and associate member Governments in the following:

"(a) Developing and pursuing national programmes of action during the forthcoming Decade;

"(b) Formulating and implementing technical guidelines and legislation to promote disabled persons' access to buildings, public facilities, transport and communications systems, information, education and training, and technical aids;

"8. Further requests the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission biennially until the end of the Decade on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution and to submit recommendations to the Commission, as required, on action to maintain the momentum of the Decade."

3. The Commission also adopted the following resolution 48/2 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission for submission to the Economic and Social Council for approval:

"48/2. Restructuring the conference structure of the Commission

"The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

"Recalling its resolutions 143 (XXX) of 5 April 1974, 210 (XXXVI) of 29 March 1980, 262 (XLIII) of 30 April 1987, and 47/3 of 10 April 1991 on the conference structure of the Commission,

"Recalling also General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977, in which the regional commissions were designated as the main general economic and social development centres within the United Nations system for their respective regions and directed to exercise team leadership and responsibility for coordination at the regional level, resolution 33/202 of 29 January 1979, in which it was decided that the regional commissions should have the status of executing agencies in their own right, and resolution 34/206 of 19 December 1979, on the implementation of resolution 32/197,

"Reaffirming that the complexity of the development problems faced by the developing countries increasingly demands that these problems be tackled in a comprehensive manner through interdisciplinary and intersectoral action, and therefore reaffirming its endorsement, in general, at its forty-seventh session, of the recommendation of the Group of Eminent Persons on Intergovernmental Structure Subsidiary to the Commission relating to the progressive reorganization of the work of the Commission on a thematic basis,

"Recognizing that a reoriented and more effective subsidiary structure would be able to respond better to the changing needs of the members and associate members in the light of emerging economic and social development in the region and the changing scope of regional cooperation, as well as to utilize fully the multidisciplinary advantage of the Commission and its increased capability in technical assistance activities,

"Having considered the recommendations of the Meeting of Senior Officials on the Intergovernmental Structure Subsidiary to the Commission, held at Bangkok from 13 to 17 January 1992, as well as those of the Intergovernmental Meeting on Regional Economic Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific, held at Beijing from 10 to 16 December 1991,

"1. Decides to revise the conference structure and frequency of meetings to conform to the following pattern:

"(1) The Commission

"The Commission shall meet annually for up to eight working days at the ministerial level to discuss and decide upon important issues concerning economic and social development in the region, to decide upon the recommendations of its subsidiary bodies and of the Executive Secretary, to examine and approve the programme of work and priorities and to take any other decisions required, in conformity with its terms of reference.

"(2) Subsidiary structure

"A. The following committees and special bodies shall be established and meet at the intervals indicated below:

Thematic committees	Periodicity
Regional economic cooperation	Annual, immediately preceding the Commission session, with the exception of its first session in 1992
Steering group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation	Twice a year, or as often as required, starting in 1992
Environment and sustainable development	Annual, starting in 1993
Poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development	Annual, starting in 1993
Other committees	
Statistics	Biennial, starting in 1992
Transport and communications	Biennial, starting in 1993
Special bodies	
Least developed and land-locked developing countries	Biennial, starting in 1993
Pacific Island developing countries	Annual, 1993-1995, thereafter biennial

"B. In order to facilitate its work, the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation shall have a high-level steering group, which will meet twice a year or as often as required. Such a steering group shall form its own agenda and organize its own procedure of work under the overall direction of the Committee. Without prejudice to the principle of equal participation by all members and associate members of the Commission in ESCAP activities, and reaffirming that regional cooperation is primarily the concern and responsibility of the regional members and associate members within the geographical scope of the Commission, the membership of the steering group shall be drawn, on a voluntary basis, from members and associate members within the geographical scope of the Commission. Other members may be welcomed to participate, when desirable, in meetings of the steering group.

"C. The revised structure is shown in chart form in annex I to the present resolution.

"(3) Ad hoc ministerial conferences

"(a) Subject to the approval of the Commission, ad hoc ministerial conferences may be organized on specific issues. Normally, no more than one such conference may be organized during a year;

"(b) In those years when a ministerial conference is held, which is regarded as covering issues normally discussed in a corresponding committee or special body, that committee or special body shall not be convened.

"(4) Ad hoc intergovernmental meetings

"(a) Ad hoc intergovernmental meetings may be convened with the prior approval of the Commission, to carry out a detailed examination of substantive and priority issues;

"(b) No more than fifteen such intergovernmental meetings may be held during a calendar year for a maximum of one hundred calendar days.

"(5) Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

"The functions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission shall be strengthened in accordance with the terms of reference contained in annex II to the present resolution.

"(6) Existing bodies under the auspices of the Commission

"The following existing bodies under the auspices of the Commission shall function as prescribed in the respective statutes and terms of reference:

"(a) Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology;

"(b) Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific;

"(c) Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific.

"(7) General provisions

"(a) Functions

"The functions of the committees and special bodies are specified in their respective terms of reference in annexes III-IX to the present resolution. Committees should select priority issues and focus on well-defined problems in order to show tangible results during the committees' tenure.

"(b) Duration of meetings

"Meetings of all committees shall last for no more than five working days.

"(c) Rules of procedure

"Unless otherwise specified by the Commission, the rules of procedure of the Commission, including those pertaining to the decision-making process, shall apply mutatis mutandis to the committees and special bodies.

"(8) Other provisions shall include the following:

"(a) In view of the establishment of the Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries, the existing Special Body on Land-locked Countries shall be deleted from the conference structure;

"(b) The existing provision for convening ad hoc conferences shall be deleted from the conference structure;

"2. Invites the Executive Secretary, under the direction of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and in conformity with the goal of maximizing the impact of the United Nations in the field of economic and social development, to reorganize the secretariat so as to enhance its capability to service the thematic intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission and implement its revised programme of work under the framework of the revised medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997;

"3. Requests the Executive Secretary to forward, within the next three months, his assessment of the organizational, staffing and financial implications of the revision of the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission to the seats of Governments of members and associate members, through the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, for their consideration and decision;

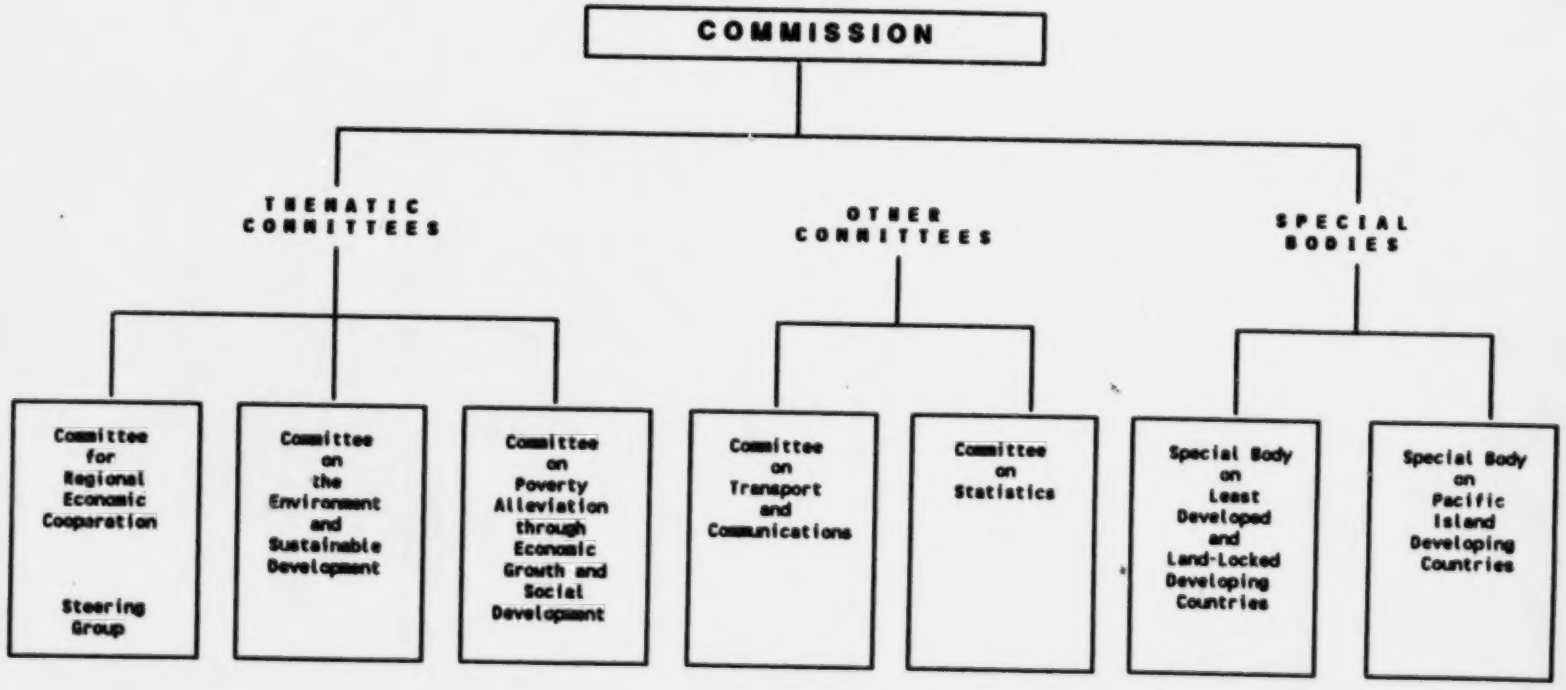
"4. Requests the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fiftieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

"5. Decides to review the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic priorities and its subsidiary structure, no later than at the fifty-third session of the Commission.

"ANNEX I

"Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

"Subsidiary structure of the Commission


COMMISSION
THEMATIC COMMITTEES
OTHER COMMITTEES
SPECIAL BODIES
Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation
Steering Group
Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development
Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development
Committee on Transport and Communications
Committee on Statistics
Special Body on Least Developed and Land-Locked Developing Countries
Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries

Ministerial conferences

Ministerial conferences would be organized on an ad hoc basis on specific issues concerning areas such as the environment, industry and technology, international trade, population, poverty alleviation, social development, women in development, and urbanization.

Advisory body

Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission convened monthly by the Executive Secretary.

.../

"ANNEX II

"Terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

"The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission shall have the following functions:

"1. To maintain close cooperation and consultation between the members and the secretariat of the Commission.

"2. To advise and assist the Executive Secretary in drawing up proposals for the medium-term plan, programme budget and priorities, consistent with the guidelines provided by the Commission.

"3. To receive on a regular basis information on the administrative and financial functioning of ESCAP, and to assist and advise the Executive Secretary in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the ESCAP programme of work.

"4. To review the draft calendar of meetings, prior to its submission to the Commission session.

"5. To exchange views with the Executive Secretary on the provisional agenda for each session of the Commission, bearing in mind chapter II of its rules of procedure.

"6. To assist the secretariat in the formulation of the annotated provisional agenda for each session of the Commission before it is finalized.

"7. To monitor the functioning of the thematic approach and the implementation of activities under it, in order to provide an assessment of the thematic approach and to suggest to the Commission at the appropriate time potential modifications to or changes of the themes.

"8. To carry out any other tasks to be entrusted to it by the Commission.

"ANNEX III

"Terms of reference of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation

"In order to sustain and extend the scope of the current dynamism of the economies in the Asian and Pacific region by strengthening their growing interdependence and complementarities, there is an urgent need to enhance economic cooperation in the region. Given the imperative of such

enhanced regional economic cooperation for harnessing the potential that exists in the region, the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation, under the overall supervision of the Commission, shall perform the following functions:

"1. Serve as a mobilizer of ideas, a forum for policy-oriented discussion, and a catalyst for action to promote regional economic cooperation.

"2. Review periodically:

"(a) The impact on the economies of the Asian and Pacific region of global economic interdependence in such areas as trade, financial and investment flows, technological progress and industrial growth;

"(b) The future economic outlook of the region and the structural adjustments needed to strengthen the economies of the region.

"3. Initiate policy-oriented studies on regional economic cooperation which, after review by the Committee or its Steering Group, should be disseminated widely in the region.

"4. Identify potential areas for regional economic cooperation, recommend appropriate policy options and assist the regional members and associate members of the Commission in implementing measures to achieve such cooperation by encouraging, facilitating and sponsoring consultations through the establishment of working groups, including expert and technical groups and other appropriate arrangements.

"5. Develop a close relationship with relevant subregional organizations, promote the interchange of information on their activities and studies on issues relating to regional economic cooperation, and encourage linkages among them.

"6. Devise ways and means of establishing dialogue with development agencies and financial institutions, private sector organizations, non-governmental organizations, and donor countries, within and outside the region, in its initiatives and activities to promote regional economic cooperation.

"7. Work closely with other subsidiary organs of the Commission and coordinate its activities with them.

"8. Carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time in matters relating to regional economic cooperation.

"Composition and operational modalities

"The Committee shall be composed of all members and associate members of the Commission.

"The Committee shall have a high-level steering group drawn from regional members and associate members on a voluntary basis.

"The Committee shall meet once a year, preferably immediately before the Commission session. The steering group shall meet twice a year or as often as required.

"ANNEX IV

"Terms of reference of the Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development

"In view of the continuing environmental degradation in the Asian and Pacific region, mindful of the need to integrate environmental considerations with development objectives, and with a view to ensuring the judicious management of energy and other natural resources for preserving and promoting the conditions necessary for sustainable development, the Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development shall perform the following functions:

"1. Review and assess the state of the environment in the region within the context of sustainable development.

"2. Review and analyse progress in the development and management of energy and natural resources, keeping in view the need for ensuring sustainable development, and make recommendations on strategies, policies, methods and techniques for the proper investigation, development, utilization and management of energy and natural resources.

"3. Identify priority issues in the sustainable development of energy and natural resources, examine the environmental impact of the development and utilization of energy and other natural resources and recommend appropriate strategies and policies to minimize any adverse impact.

"4. Assist interested members and associate members in undertaking comprehensive national assessment of risks from natural hazards and taking such assessment into account in their development plans.

"5. Undertake surveys and studies for enhancing the understanding of the interrelationship between environmental factors and the development process.

"6. Identify and highlight the major environmental processes and concerns with a view to promoting policies and strategies for sustainable development in the region.

"7. Promote understanding of the relationship between the environment and poverty and encourage the adoption of environmental strategies which pay due regard to the problems of the poorest sections of the population.

"8. Encourage the integration of environmental concerns into development policies, plans and programmes at both the macroeconomic and sectoral levels, emphasizing particularly the problems of the least developed and island developing countries.

"9. Encourage the setting of standards and the introduction of legal frameworks for managing natural resources as well as ensuring environmental safeguards in manufacturing, product development and trade.

"10. Promote environmental awareness at all levels.

"11. Promote regional and subregional cooperation in the fields of environmental protection, and sustainable development of energy and natural resources, taking into account the diversity of national situations in the ESCAP region.

"12. Articulate the region's response to relevant international initiatives to ensure that such initiatives do not constrain the sustainable development of the region, taking into account the need to improve the international economic environment.

"13. Review regional activities in the field of the environment and sustainable development, make recommendations on the formulation and implementation of the programme of work of the secretariat, and monitor and evaluate the progress of those activities.

"14. Encourage the establishment of appropriate mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels to ensure sustainable development through environmental protection and the judicious management of energy and natural resources.

"15. Establish liaison with other agencies, organizations and bodies at the subregional, regional and global levels and take into account their relevant recommendations.

"16. Work closely with other subsidiary organs of the Commission and coordinate activities with them.

"17. Carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time.

"The Committee shall meet annually and report to the Commission.

"ANNEX V

"Terms of reference of the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development

"Notwithstanding the impressive record of economic growth achieved by the developing economies in the ESCAP region, the region still contains the majority of the world's poor. This situation underscores the fact that rapid growth, by itself, does not guarantee the elimination of or significant reduction in poverty. Therefore, a holistic approach to economic growth inclusive of social development, with poverty alleviation as its major focus, is needed in the region. With a view to articulating such an approach and helping the achievement of a significant degree of poverty alleviation in the region in the 1990s, the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development shall perform the following functions:

"1. Review the current trends in economic and social strategies in the region to ensure that, while the region continues to make advances in economic growth, the alleviation of poverty receives high priority in the national policies and programmes for the achievement of economic growth and social development.

"2. Encourage the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic policies and sectoral and intersectoral programmes targeted at the alleviation of poverty, with a focus on vulnerable social groups and such specific groups as isolated rural communities, slum dwellers, the rural landless, and the unemployed.

"3. Review and analyse progress in the improvement of policies and programmes for enhancing agricultural growth and rural development, and in particular consider appropriate measures to promote agricultural and rural development with a view to improving the conditions of the rural poor.

"4. Consider means whereby poverty alleviation strategies and policies may be effectively formulated and implemented through the participation of the poor.

"5. Consider and make recommendations on issues and programmes relating to population, as well as the related issues of social security and social services, to ensure development commensurate with the development objectives of all members and associate members of the Commission.

"6. Consider appropriate measures whereby basic human needs, particularly food and nutrition, health care, education and shelter, can be met through decentralization and devolution of authority, and the participation of non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

"7. Review progress in the integration of women in all aspects of development, and promote the intensification of efforts at the national and regional levels to integrate women into the development process.

"8. Undertake periodic review of rural and urban poverty, including its interaction with economic growth, population dynamics, the urbanization process and environmental factors, and suggest development policy towards substantial progress in the alleviation of poverty.

"9. Consider and make recommendations on the intersectoral approach in the work programme of the Commission to ensure that concerns relating to poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development are adequately reflected in all activities and programmes undertaken by the secretariat.

"10. Establish liaison with other agencies, organizations and bodies at the subregional, regional and global levels, and take into account their relevant recommendations.

"11. Work closely with other subsidiary organs of the Commission and coordinate activities with them.

"12. Carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time.

"The Committee shall meet annually and report to the Commission.

"ANNEX VI

"Terms of reference of the Committee on Statistics

"The Committee on Statistics shall perform the following functions:

"1. Review and analyse progress in the development of statistics in the region.

"2. Assist in the strengthening of the statistical infrastructure in the countries of the region, promote the improvement of the quality of statistics, the international comparability of data and the application of new techniques, and arrange for the exchange of information on and experience in statistical work and methods among the countries.

"3. Promote the adoption of international statistical standards and their adaptation, as appropriate, to the conditions and needs of the countries of the region.

"4. Promote close coordination of the statistical activities of international organizations in regard to their work in the Asian and Pacific region, so as to achieve greater uniformity in concepts and

definitions and reduce to a minimum the burden on national statistical offices.

"5. Promote the generation and analysis of statistical data relevant to regional economic cooperation, such as intraregional trade and investment flows in the region.

"6. Encourage, with due regard to relevant international work, efforts to develop a set of standardized statistical indicators for the region and, where necessary, a measurement methodology for assessing:

"(a) The quality of life;

"(b) The quality of the environment;

"(c) The application of science and technology to development.

"7. Recommend programmes of technical assistance, training, education and research in the various fields of statistics and their application.

"8. Review and analyse the progress in the development of computerized information processing in the region, especially in the public sector, and make recommendations on issues concerning policies and strategies, as well as on programmes of technical assistance, training and research in this field.

"9. Review and evaluate the activities of the secretariat in the areas of statistics and computerized information processing and provide guidance on the work of the secretariat, paying due regard to the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission and other relevant bodies.

"10. Make recommendations to the Advisory Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on the nature of and priorities in statistical training for the countries of the region.

"11. Inform the United Nations Statistical Commission and, where appropriate, the statistical authorities of the specialized agencies and other relevant bodies, of its work, so that due attention may be given to the wider aspects of the issues considered by the Committee.

"12. Work closely with other subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and coordinate activities with them.

"13. Carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time.

"The Committee shall meet once every two years and report to the Commission.

"ANNEX VII

"Terms of reference of the Committee on Transport and Communications

"The Committee on Transport and Communications shall perform the following functions:

"1. Review and analyse issues, policies and progress in the areas of transport, communications and tourism and advise on the major requirements in these fields, with a view to ensuring that transport and communications infrastructural facilities and services are raised to a level commensurate with the development objectives and priorities of developing members and associate members of the Commission in the region.

"2. Encourage the promotion of transport and communications facilities in remote areas of the region, paying special attention to those of the least developed, land-locked and Pacific Island developing countries, with a view to alleviating poverty and reducing intraregional disparities in the opportunities for development. The Committee will coordinate its activities with the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development and with the Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries and the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries.

"3. Promote the creation of and improvement in regional infrastructure facilities and services and border facilitation in the fields of transport and communications, with a view to strengthening regional economic cooperation among the countries of the region. The Committee will work closely with the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation.

"4. Recommend measures to address problems of environmental degradation, such as the pollution and deterioration of coastlines and the atmosphere, arising generally from the development of transport and communications infrastructure and particularly from the design, choice of technology, maintenance and operation of various transport vehicles. The Committee will work closely with the Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

"5. Review and undertake policy-oriented studies on current and emerging developments and trends in the fields of transport and communications, as well as on technical innovations and policy-induced changes in those fields; and make recommendations on technical assistance programmes of the Commission.

"6. Promote the exchange of experience and techniques in the fields of planning, operation, management, safety and manpower development of transport and communications.

"7. Promote tourism at the regional, subregional and national levels, in particular through the development of related infrastructure and human resources, and take steps, in close cooperation with the relevant committees, to minimize the adverse impact of tourism on the social and physical environment.

"8. Review and evaluate progress in the implementation of the regional action programme for the second quinquennium of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, and provide guidance on the lead or coordinating agency function of ESCAP for the regional action programme on transport and communications, the implementation of the ESCAP input to the regional action programme, and coordination and cooperation with other regional commissions, in particular the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, in relation to their transport and communications programmes.

"9. Promote coordination and cooperation between ESCAP and other regional commissions, international agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as existing subregional groupings, in their activities on transport and communications issues at the regional level, particularly where these relate to the regional action programme for the second quinquennium of the Decade.

"10. Work closely with other subsidiary organs of the Commission and coordinate activities with them.

"11. Carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time.

"The Committee shall meet once every two years and report to the Commission.

"ANNEX VIII

"Terms of reference of the Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries

"In order to help accelerate the pace of development in the least developed and land-locked developing countries within the context of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries shall perform the following functions:

"1. Review and monitor economic and social progress in the least developed countries, particularly within the context of the implementation, at the regional level, of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, and identify and recommend new policy measures as and when necessary.

"2. Foster new and strengthen existing intercountry cooperation arrangements between the least developed countries and other developing countries, including the organization of cluster meetings as suggested in the Programme of Action.

"3. Undertake periodic analysis and ensure regular dissemination of information on the macroeconomic performance of the least developed countries of the region.

"4. Undertake in-depth reviews of economic, social and environmental constraints on the least developed countries, and identify and recommend effective policy action at the national, regional and international levels for the removal of such constraints, in particular with regard to measures for increased mobilization of domestic and foreign resources, which should receive the continued attention of the Committee.

"5. Assist the least developed countries in the formulation of appropriate sectoral development strategies, policies and programmes, paying due attention to the diverse development circumstances and constraints facing the least developed countries.

"6. Convene expert groups, seminars and training courses on subjects of special interest to the least developed countries, as appropriate.

"7. Coordinate the secretariat's programme on least developed countries in order to ensure effective implementation of the Programme of Action in the region.

"8. Review the special problems of transit trade and of transport in land-locked countries and recommend suitable measures for solving these problems in accordance with international legal instruments, in particular article 125 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

"9. Encourage, through all its activities, the land-locked developing countries and their transit neighbours to deal with the transit problems within the context of bilateral cooperation.

"10. Initiate studies on such subjects as may be required in relation to the special problems of the land-locked countries of the region.

"11. Organize expert groups, seminars and training courses on subjects of specific interest to the land-locked and the transit countries concerned, such as customs administration and procedures, inland transport, port facilities, shipping, and ocean freight rates.

"12. Arrange for technical and financial assistance from national, regional and international financial institutions for the purpose of improving transit and transport facilities for the land-locked countries.

"13. Establish liaison with other agencies, organizations and bodies at the subregional, regional and global levels, and take into account their relevant recommendations.

"14. Work closely with other subsidiary organs of the Commission and coordinate activities with them.

"15. Carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time.

"The Special Body shall meet once every two years and report to the Commission.

"ANNEX IX

"Terms of reference of the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries

"In order to ensure the participation of the Pacific Island developing countries in the mainstream of the economic dynamism of the ESCAP region and to assist them in overcoming their special problems of isolation, small size and vulnerability to environmental hazards, and taking into account the work of other organizations and agencies functioning in the area, the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries shall perform the following functions:

"1. Review and assess progress in the development of the subregion, and assist in the formulation of social and economic development strategies, policies and programmes.

"2. Examine special development problems in the subregion, particularly those faced by the least developed or smaller island economies, and identify appropriate domestic policies and possible avenues and modalities of external economic and technical assistance to solve or alleviate those problems.

"3. Review and make recommendations for policy-oriented research and action on macroeconomic and sectoral development issues in the light of the special constraints being faced by the Pacific Island developing countries.

"4. Give special attention to overcoming the development constraints faced by the Pacific Island countries by fostering and strengthening economic and technical cooperation among the countries and

areas of the subregion, and between the subregion and other ESCAP members and associate members.

"5. Identify technical assistance and other activities to be implemented for the benefit of the subregion.

"6. Establish liaison with other agencies, organizations and bodies at the subregional, regional and global levels and take into account their relevant recommendations.

"7. Work closely with other subsidiary organs of the Commission and coordinate activities with them.

"8. Carry out such other activities as the Commission may direct from time to time.

"The Special Body shall meet once every two years and report to the Commission."

2. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

4. At its twenty-fourth session, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean received an invitation from the Government of Colombia to hold its twenty-fifth session at Cartagena, Colombia, in 1994. On 15 April, the Commission adopted resolution 532 (XXIV), in which it accepted that invitation and recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it should approve the holding of the twenty-fifth session of ECLAC in Colombia in 1994.

3. Economic Commission for Africa

5. At its twenty-seventh session, the Commission received an offer by the Government of Zambia to hold the twenty-eighth session of the Commission/Nineteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers at Lusaka, Zambia, in April 1993. The Commission unanimously approved by acclamation this generous invitation in accordance with section I, paragraph 4 (f), of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, subject to the approval of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

6. Also at the twenty-seventh session of the Commission/Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers, held at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 20 to 23 April 1992, the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning unanimously adopted the following resolutions and decisions calling for action by the Council:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face Africa's development challenges in the 1990s 1/

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the terms of reference of the Commission as adopted by resolution 671 (XXV) of the Economic and Social Council of 29 April 1958 and amended by resolution 974 D.I (XXXVI) of July 1963, resolution 1343 (XLV) of 18 July 1968 and resolution 1978/68 of 4 August 1978,

Recalling further the various resolutions that have implications on the mandate and operations of the Commission, including, in particular, General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, and Assembly resolutions 33/202 of 29 January 1979 and 44/211 of 21 December 1989,

Noting with appreciation the endorsement by the Economic and Social Council of the ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 718 (XXVI) on the revitalization of the mandate and operational framework of the regional commission for Africa,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 45/177 of 19 December 1990, 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in which the regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and those located in developing countries strengthened in the context of the overall objectives of the ongoing restructuring and the revitalization process,

Reiterating the validity of the general orientation of the work programme of the Commission as outlined in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, including the identified individual subprogrammes,

Convinced that the many and important changes that are taking place in the member States of the Commission, the international environment as well as in the United Nations system as a whole will necessitate new approaches by the Commission in carrying out its mandate and new relationships with its constituency and partners, with a view to increasing its impacts,

Having examined the in-depth analysis made by the Acting Executive Secretary of ECA as contained in document E/ECA/CM.18/4 entitled "The Economic Commission for Africa in the 1990s: a policy and management framework for facing Africa's development challenges",

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1/ Resolution 726 (XXVII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

1. Congratulates the Acting Executive Secretary of the Commission for the initiative he took to establish a Task Force to review and appraise the policy orientation, programmes and management capacity of ECA and for the excellent analysis of the pertinent issues and useful and innovative proposals he has made;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to ensure that there is a clear and concrete balance between the research and operational activities of the ECA secretariat and sharply focus all such activities of the Commission on the specific realities and characteristics of the African region, and on individual subregions;

3. Also requests the Executive Secretary of the Commission to ensure that its activities are fully grounded in sound data and information systems, through the strengthening of the Pan-African Information and Documentation System (PADIS), which should be provided with adequate financial resources;

4. Further requests the Executive Secretary to ascertain that the implementation of all subprogrammes contained in the work programme of the Commission is solidly based on the full attainment of the identified basic indicators of achievement of the objectives of ECA, namely, strengthening the advisory role of ECA on socio-economic questions; promoting regional cooperation and integration; enhancing the efficiency of the public sector; promoting of private initiatives and entrepreneurship; development, dissemination and utilization of science and technology; ensuring a desirable balance between food supply, population, human settlements and environment; fostering human-centred development; achieving structural transformation and diversification of African economies; and promotion of women in development;

5. Welcomes the process of frequent and close consultations of the secretariat with the member States and donors through the regular briefing sessions, including with their representatives at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

6. Recommends the establishment, within existing resources, of a consultative mechanism that would advise the Executive Secretary on the grouping of conferences along specific themes, including scheduling and the preparation of conferences, meetings, seminars and workshops, taking into account the need to harmonize them with those of the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank to avoid duplication and achieve greater efficiency;

7. Urges the Executive Secretary of ECA to explore all possibilities to establish or strengthen the relationships of the Commission with African intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations specialized agencies, bilateral and multilateral development cooperation agencies and non-governmental organizations, including, in particular, the possibility of establishing joint units or special programmes with the different United Nations specialized agencies, and the creation of a special unit within the ECA secretariat to coordinate the increased joint activities of ECA with non-governmental organizations;

8. Expresses appreciation to the General Assembly for providing additional resources to the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) and, consequently, recommends that in conformity with ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 702 (XXV) on transforming and strengthening the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa, the MULPOCs should be further strengthened through redeployment of resources and be given specific assignments with respect to technical assistance and advisory services for the execution of joint projects of member States within the framework of the intergovernmental organizations, in their respective subregions, and they should be enabled to act as the major subregional focal points to collect and disseminate information on all aspects of economic cooperation and integration;

9. Also expresses its gratitude to the General Assembly for providing the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) four additional posts for the 1992-1993 biennium thus enabling IDEP to contribute to the process of strengthening the operational capacity of ECA in meeting the challenges facing Africa in the 1990s, and requests the redeployment of resources which would enable IDEP to assume additional responsibility;

10. Requests the Executive Secretary, in close cooperation with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to undertake a thorough examination of the problems and constraints facing the ECA-sponsored institutions and subsequently make concrete proposals aimed at alleviating the different problems and consider alternative solutions such as merging some of the institutions;

11. Appeals to bilateral and multilateral donors to increase their financial and other forms of assistance to ECA to enable it to shoulder its responsibilities to the member States in the form of extrabudgetary operational activities;

12. Requests the Executive Secretary to undertake, as may become necessary, reforms in the structure of the secretariat so as to achieve full consistency with the new orientations recommended herein and attain greater efficiency and increased capacity for the secretariat to serve as a veritable effective organ for the economic and social development of Africa;

13. Requests the Executive Secretary to report on the progress of implementation of the present resolution to the nineteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers and twenty-eighth session of the Commission.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: strengthening the role and functions of the regional commissions 2/

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the terms of reference of the Commission as adopted by resolution 671 (XXV) of the Economic and Social Council of 29 April 1958 and amended by resolution 974 D.I (XXXVI) of July 1963, resolution 1343 (XLV) of 18 July 1968 and resolution 1978/68 of 4 August 1978,

Recalling further Economic and Social Council decision to endorse the ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 718 (XXVI) on the revitalization of the mandate and operational framework of the regional commission for Africa,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 45/177, 45/264 and 46/235 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, in which the regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and those located in developing countries should be strengthened in the context of the overall objectives of the ongoing restructuring and the revitalization process,

Convinced that the Economic Commission for Africa plays a vital catalytic role in the coordination and execution of intercountry programmes and projects aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and integration, especially by fostering the goals of the African Economic Community,

1. Reaffirms the continuing validity of the role of regional economic commissions as important organs of the United Nations for promoting the socio-economic development of their respective regions;

2. Appeals to the Secretary-General that in the context of the ongoing restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, due recognition is accorded to the vital role of the regional commissions.

2/ Resolution 728 (XXVII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

DRAFT DECISION

Industrial development in Africa 3/

The Economic and Social Council, having taken note of the report on the programme for the United Nations Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa,

1. Endorses the resolution of the tenth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry adopting the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa;

2. Recommends the adoption of the programme to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, through the Economic and Social Council at its regular session;

3. Requests the General Assembly to increase substantially resources provided to ECA for the Industrial Development Decade for Africa so as to strengthen its capacity to assist effectively member States and subregional organizations in the implementation of the programme;

4. Requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to submit to the next session of the Commission a harmonization plan through the sectoral conferences of the programmes of the United Nations Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa;

5. Further requests the Executive Secretary to do his utmost in order to strengthen cooperation between the secretariats of ECA and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, particularly with regard to industrial policy, programmes and project formulation at the subregional and regional levels.

DRAFT DECISION

Implementation of the United Nations Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa 4/

The Economic and Social Council, taking note of the report of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole on the progress report on the implementation of the United Nations Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa:

3/ Decision 1 (XXVII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

4/ Decision 2 (XXVII) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

1. Urges member States to establish national coordination committees and revitalize their operation where they exist;

2. Requests the General Assembly to provide the Economic Commission for Africa with the necessary budgetary resources to enable it effectively and efficiently to carry out all the repsonsibilities and additional activities mandated to it in General Assembly decision 46/456, as lead agency and coordinator of the programme of the second Decade.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

1. Economic Commission for Europe

Decision A (47). The work of the Commission as a whole and its future activities

7. The Commission reaffirmed its determination to implement decisions O (45) and P (45) and requested its subsidiary bodies and the Executive Secretary to carry out without delay the provisions of those decisions. It requested its subsidiary bodies also to take into account the provisions of the documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which call for multilateral implementation within ECE, and the Executive Secretary to report to CSCE meetings if invited on the relevant activities of ECE. The Commission approved its programme of work for 1992-1993 and endorsed, in principle, subject to review at its forty-eighth session, its programme of work for 1992-1996.

Decision B (47). The provision of adequate resources for the servicing of the priority sectors of the Economic Commission for Europe

8. Conscious that the efficiency and effectiveness of ECE depends to a large extent on the contribution of properly qualified and experienced staff, the Commission was concerned that work of particular importance was being seriously hindered by unfilled vacancies, by difficulties in redeploying resources to priority areas, and the temporary suspension of external recruitment in all but exceptional circumstances. The Commission requested that key posts be filled without delay and that the Department of Administration and Management take the necessary action to ensure that appointments are made in a timely manner. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to transmit the decision to the Secretary-General and agreed to keep the situation under review through its officers and during its ad hoc informal meetings.

Decision C (47). The fundamental principles of official statistics in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe

9. Bearing in mind that official statistical information is an essential basis for development in the economic, demographic, social and environmental fields and for mutual knowledge and trade among the States and peoples of the region, the Commission took cognizance of the consensus reached within the Conference of European Statisticians on the need to define the principles governing the activities of the official statistical agencies in the region and in the member States, and adopted a set of 10 such principles.

Decision D (47). The work of the Commission concerning economies in transition in Eastern and Central Europe

10. The Commission noted that workshops, symposia and similar activities organized by ECE on different aspects of economic restructuring were being held to provide advice for the countries of Eastern and Central Europe in facilitating their transition to a market economy. It expressed its appreciation for the work already done. While noting the valuable contributions already made by various Governments and institutions, the Commission invited all Governments, the European Community, competent international institutions and private donors to examine possibilities to finance the organization and participation of experts from Eastern and Central Europe in workshops. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the provision of expertise on programmes of transition to a market economy, to study issues on privatization, and to prepare a comprehensive study evaluating the results of workshops with a view to preparing recommendations concerning the organization and methodology of future workshops.

Decision E (47). Cooperation in the field of environment and sustainable development

11. Reaffirming that environmental cooperation was one of ECE priorities, the Commission appealed to member Governments to strengthen further this cooperation, and stressed the importance of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and of the concept of sustainable development. The Commission welcomed the adoption and signature of various international instruments in the field of protection of the environment in the past year, and the work under way to prepare framework conventions to be concluded in time for signature during UNCED. It appealed to Governments to integrate the environmental dimension in their national policies. The Commission encouraged the implementation of the campaign "Energy Efficiency 2000", aimed at enhancing trade and cooperation in energy-efficient, environmentally sound technologies. It asked the relevant subsidiary bodies to contribute to sustainable industrial development, including the follow-up to the High-level Meeting on Cooperation and Sustainable Development in the Chemical Industry.

Decision F (47). Cooperation in the field of transport

12. The Commission underlined the importance of transport questions in regional cooperation, in particular as regards assistance to economies in transition. It noted with satisfaction the decision of the Inland Transport Committee to identify as high priority questions of infrastructure and combined transport, without prejudice to former priorities, stressing the importance of the availability of reliable data and the need for compatible analytical methods as a basis for coherent infrastructure development. The Commission supported the work done to revise certain infrastructure

agreements, and invited Governments to examine existing agreements to identify bottlenecks and/or take the necessary legislative steps on the national level to ensure their proper implementation, or to sign them. It welcomed the work already done or planned on road safety, and on dimensions of loading units, and stressed the need to promote environmentally sound transport development and the importance of removing obstacles and delays at border crossings.

Decision G (47). Economic cooperation in the Mediterranean in the light of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

13. Recognizing that the strengthening of economic cooperation among member States of ECE contributed to promoting stability in the Mediterranean region, and conscious of the need to develop such cooperation in the light of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Charter of Paris, the Commission stressed the need to devote special efforts to protection of the Mediterranean ecosystem. It called on the Executive Secretary to continue to undertake action-oriented studies on economic cooperation in the Mediterranean, in particular in the priority areas of ECE. It pressed for ECE to be involved with the Mediterranean Transport Development Project, so that it could be made operational as soon as possible, and expressed satisfaction at the activities of the three transport centres in the Mediterranean region. The Commission welcomed the convening of a Meeting of Statistical Offices of the Mediterranean countries, and welcomed the conclusions of, and follow-up to, the Seminar on the Analysis of Traffic Flows within Transport Corridors in Europe. It noted the activities of the Meetings of Experts on Human Settlements Problems in Southern Europe. The Executive Secretary was requested to facilitate consultations regarding the Mediterranean Technical Assistance Programme (METAP) and the Mediterranean Special Programme of Action (MEDSPA) with a view to strengthening further the environmental management and development in the Mediterranean region.

2. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

14. In adopting resolution 48/1 on the Declaration on enhancing regional economic cooperation, the Commission stressed the importance of a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, and the need for an open world-trading system to underpin regional efforts. The development of a resilient and buoyant economy in the ESCAP region, and growing linkages among its members and associate members were viewed as the cornerstone for regional stability and improved political relations. While recognizing remarkable economic growth and trade expansion in the ESCAP region as a whole, the Commission expressed its concern that such high-level performance had not been shared by all the economies of the region, particularly the least developed, land-locked and Pacific island economies. To impart new impetus to economic cooperation in the region, the Commission stressed, inter alia, that the principles of equality and consensus-building in consultation and dialogue be followed, taking into full account the

diversity of the region, and to the special needs of developing members and associate members. The Commission urged strongly that promotion of intraregional trade and investment, and greater cooperation in science and technology and in the development of infrastructure should receive high priority in economic cooperation in Asia and the Pacific and in the Commission's deliberations. In welcoming the setting up of the Thematic Committee on Regional Economic Cooperation, it called upon all members to give full and active support to the principles and objectives set forth in the resolution to be known as the Beijing Declaration on Regional Cooperation. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to take into full account the Beijing Declaration in the formulation of the Commission's work programme and priorities, and to report to the Commission on an annual basis beginning with its forty-ninth session.

15. The Commission adopted resolution 48/4 on the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, 1992 The Conference, which will be organized at the ministerial level, as jointly approved by the United Nations Population Fund at Bali, Indonesia, in August 1992, is expected to review the changes in the population situation during the 1980s and highlight the perspectives of population policies and programmes during the 1990s in countries and areas of Asia and the Pacific. Member and associate member Governments are called upon to undertake the necessary review and appraisal of population trends and policies in their countries and areas. The Commission urged that, in their deliberations, they should aim at determining goals, strategies and directions for the achievement of sustainable development in the twenty-first century. The Commission requested that follow-up activities be undertaken and that the findings and recommendations of the Conference, as the main Asian and Pacific regional input, be presented to the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in 1994.

16. The Commission endorsed the adoption by the Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development (Manila, October 1991) of the Manila Declaration on a Social Development Strategy for the ESCAP Region Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond. It also adopted resolution 48/5 on the social development strategy for the ESCAP region towards the year 2000 and beyond, and expressed concern that poverty had persisted, and in some cases had become more entrenched, and that the quality of life of the majority of people in the region continued to be marked by deprivation of the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and essential services such as clear water, sanitation, etc. It urged that modalities for the implementation of the Strategy should be examined, and for that purpose it recommended the establishment of an inter-agency task force and a forum of non-governmental organizations in order to ensure effective coordination in the implementation of the Strategy. The Commission decided that a regional conference of senior government officials and other relevant United Nations organizations be convened in 1994 to deal with the issue, and requested the Executive Secretary to submit a progress report on the implementation of the Strategy to the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development in 1996.

17. At its forty-eighth session, the Commission noted the importance the Governments of the ESCAP region had attached to the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development, as reflected, inter alia, in the establishment of the ESCAP Network of National Focal Points for Human Resources Development. The Commission adopted resolution 48/6, on Regional cooperation in the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP region. The resolution called upon its members and associate members to intensify their efforts to promote human resources development through the implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action. The secretariat was urged to extend support to the activities of the ESCAP network on human resources development to strengthen linkages among agencies, and between them and non-governmental organizations and the private sector in order to build human resources information base and enhance public awareness of the concept and practice of human resources development, and thus to further refine the Jakarta Plan of Action to ensure its continued relevance to the changing conditions in the ESCAP region.

18. The Commission, in adopting resolution 48/7 on guidelines for consumer protection, noted the recommendations of the United Nations Regional Seminar on Consumer Protection for Asia and the Pacific which was held at ESCAP in June 1990. It requested that the secretariat, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and development funds and programmes of the United Nations, and other relevant bodies and agencies initiate specific activities to follow-up the recommendations of the Regional Seminar.

19. The Commission, in adopting resolution 48/8 on problems faced by the transitional disadvantaged economies in the ESCAP region, recognized the complexity of the transition process, and recommended the inclusion in the work programme of relevant activities in their favour as soon as possible. It was decided that the needs of the transitional economies should be taken into account in revising and implementing the medium-term plan of the Commission for the period 1992-1997, and without prejudice to the existing priorities and programmes established by the Commission. The secretariat was requested to provide the necessary consultancy and technical assistance in connection with the economic reform, and the structural adjustment and social development problems that accompany such reform.

20. The Commission recognized the need to address the difficult social and political issues that arise in the wake of structural adjustment programmes associated with reform measures for the Pacific island countries. The Commission adopted resolution 48/9 on strengthening ESCAP assistance to the Pacific island countries, and noted the mutual benefits which would accrue to both ESCAP headquarters at Bangkok and the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre at Vanuatu by exposing ESCAP senior staff members more closely to the special development problems of the region. The Commission requested that three professional staff members be redeployed to the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC) in order to assist the Pacific members and associate members of the Commission in the fields of economic and social management and related areas, and requested the secretariat to make an effort to implement the resolution by 1993.

21. The Commission recognized the increased importance of international trade fairs in strengthening regional economic cooperation and in the promotion of intraregional and international trade; successful Asia-Pacific International Trade Fairs organized by ESCAP in recent years were viewed as major contributions to promoting trade relations among its members and associate members. In that context, the Commission adopted resolution 48/10 on the Asia-Pacific International Trade Fair (ASPAT), in which it expressed its appreciation to the Government of China for its generous offer to host the Fifth Trade Fair at Beijing in 1994. The ESCAP secretariat was requested to extend all possible assistance to the fair, and all Governments of members and associate members of the Commission and other members of the United Nations were called upon to give it full support.

22. In adopting resolution 48/11 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures, the Commission recognized that international coordination and cooperation in the field of transport facilitation was necessary for the development of international trade and transport in the ESCAP region. The Commission noted the existence of a large number of international agreements and conventions in the field of transport facilitation, to which countries in the ESCAP region could accede or whose provisions could be used as an example for similar regional agreements and conventions. ESCAP countries who have not done so were encouraged to consider the possibility of acceding to the Convention on Road Traffic of 1968, the Convention on Road Signs and Signals of 1968, international customs transit regimes such as those stipulated in the Customs Convention of the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) of 1975 as well as those preceding them. The secretariat was requested to examine the needs of individual countries or groups of countries in relation to the adoption of facilitation measures in the field of road and rail transport, and to provide the necessary assistance to them.

23. The Commission took note of section IV of the annex of the General Assembly resolution 46/235 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and adopted resolution 48/12 on the same subject, relating to the role and functions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The Commission, based on the provisions of paragraph 6 of the resolution 46/235 directed that in view of the time constraints at the present Commission session, and as an exceptional case, the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) should seek the views of members and associate members on the above-mentioned resolution, on the basis of which a response would be formulated for submission to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, and a report would be prepared to the Commission at its next session in 1993.

24. One of the most important decisions taken by the Commission was the endorsement of the substantially revised medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, which changed the overall approach to the work of the Commission from a sectoral to a thematic orientation. The streamlined and thematically formulated plan comprises six subprogrammes based on the major issues and

themes selected by the Commission and ranked in order of priority. The six subprogrammes in order of priority are: (a) regional economic cooperation; (b) the environment and sustainable development; (c) poverty alleviation through economic growth and social development; (d) transport and communications; (e) least developed, land-locked and island developing countries; and (f) statistics. The subprogrammes embody the objectives and courses of action by the Commission to realize its restructuring and revitalization goals, and its assumption of its major role as the main coordinating body for all United Nations activities in the economic and social fields.

25. Among other important decisions were the decisions to mobilize resources and extend technical cooperation activities of ESCAP to transitional disadvantaged economies; to reiterate the Commission's commitment to the development of least developed, land-locked and island developing countries; and to monitor the secretariat's actions in relation to recruitment of more women at higher decision-making levels in compliance with the quotas and guidelines established by the General Assembly.

26. The Commission also reaffirmed its endorsement of the offer of the Indonesian Government to host the Regional Ministerial Conference on Women in Development in May 1994. The Regional Conference will be an input to the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be hosted by the Government of China in 1995. The Commission also endorsed the proposal to convene the Ministerial Conference on Urbanization at Bangkok at a convenient time following the forty-ninth session of the Commission in 1993.

3. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

27. At its twenty-fourth session, held from 8 to 15 April 1992, the Commission adopted six resolutions of particular interest to the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 520 (XXIV). Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: role and functions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

28. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the effective work performed by ECLAC and for its significant contribution to economic thinking and to Latin American and Caribbean development efforts. It expressed its conviction that the restructuring and revitalization process under way in the economic and social fields of the United Nations should accord due consideration to the usefulness of the regional, multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach which has characterized the work of the Commission. It recommended that the restructuring exercise should consider the desirability of: (a) increased decentralization in the execution of activities;

(b) improved coordination and Secretariat-wide coherence by reinforcing the activities of the regional commissions; (c) a clear division of responsibilities regarding regional technical cooperation activities between the regional commissions on the one hand and the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund on the other; and (d) improved effectiveness of technical cooperation activities by decentralizing more of the resources allotted under section 12 of the budget.

Resolution 519 (XXIV). Bases for changing production patterns with social equity in Latin America and the Caribbean

29. In this resolution the Commission welcomed the secretariat document entitled "Social equity and changing production patterns: an integrated approach", and emphasized that socially equitable, environmentally sustainable growth within a democratic framework is not only desirable but possible and that, just as it is true that social equity cannot be attained in the absence of sound, sustained growth, it is also true that such growth calls for a reasonable degree of sociopolitical stability that is founded, in its turn, upon the fulfilment of requirements in terms of social equity. The resolution also emphasizes the interrelation between growth and social equity and calls upon development policy makers and others to redouble their efforts to take into account the most vulnerable population groups. Lastly, it welcomed the documents prepared by the secretariat and recommended that they should be widely disseminated.

Resolution 521 (XXIV). Human resources, changing production patterns and social equity

30. The Commission welcomed with satisfaction the document prepared by ECLAC, together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), entitled "Education and knowledge: basic pillars of changing production patterns with social equity", and charged the secretariats of the two bodies with a series of tasks with a view to making further progress in the study, adaptation and implementation of the proposals contained therein, requesting the Executive Secretary of ECLAC to ensure that the document is disseminated extensively.

Resolution 529 (XXIV). Support for the reorientation of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning on the thirtieth anniversary of its establishment

31. In this resolution the Commission noted with satisfaction the activities report of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), as an institution with its own identity within the ECLAC system, welcomed the efforts made to achieve better-defined complementarity

and coordination with the substantive work of the ECLAC secretariat and renewed its commitment to the regular system of government financing for ILPES, within the tripartite scheme of its budgetary base. In particular, it recommended that the United Nations should consider including in its regular budget the items necessary for the convening of the intergovernmental forums of ILPES, to strengthen its operations.

Resolution 528 (XXIV). United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

32. In this resolution the Commission affirmed that ECLAC is prepared to support and coordinate regional and subregional activities within its sphere of competence, pursuant to decisions taken at the Conference.

Resolution 518 (XXIV). Measures to improve cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean

33. The Commission urged the Latin American and Caribbean countries to identify and implement viable programmes for cooperation between the Caribbean countries and the other Latin American countries and requested the Executive Secretary to formulate a structured programme of cooperation, with particular attention to the area of trade and to issues concerning the attraction of foreign investment to the Caribbean.

Other resolutions adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean at its twenty-fourth session

34. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted resolutions on the programme of work for the period 1994-1995 (resolution 524 (XXIV)) and on the calendar of conferences for the period 1992-1994 (resolution 525 (XXIV)). It also adopted resolution 522 (XXIV) on strengthening intraregional cooperation, resolution 526 (XXIV)) which sets priorities for the work of the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), resolutions 527 (XXIV) and 523 (XXIV) on preparatory activities to be carried out by ECLAC for the International Conference on Population and Development and the forthcoming World Conference on Women, resolution 530 (XXIV) on cooperation among developing countries and regions, and resolution 531 (XXIV), requesting international assistance in response to the damages caused by the eruption of the Cerro Negro volcano in Nicaragua.

4. Economic Commission for Africa

35. The Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) also adopted the following resolutions and decisions:

Resolution 727 (XXVII). Implementation of the treaty establishing the African Economic Community

36. The Conference of Ministers requested the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the President of the African Development Bank (ADB) to make every possible effort to facilitate the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community upon entry into force of the said Treaty.

Resolution 729 (XXVII). The African debt crisis

37. The Conference of Ministers welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to make alleviation of the debt burden of the poorest countries of the world a major priority area for the United Nations during his term of office and further welcomed the initiative of the Acting Executive Secretary of ECA for having organized the Africa Debt Day in New York in October 1991, which proved a useful forum for impressing upon the international community the persistence of Africa's external indebtedness.

Resolution 730 (XXVII). The role of indigenous banking and financial institutions in the mobilization of financial resources for development

38. The Conference of Ministers called upon African countries to put in place appropriate policies that will raise real incomes and savings of the African people, especially in rural areas, as well as implement financial reform programmes aimed at broadening and deepening the financial intermediation process.

Resolution 731 (XXVII). Anticipated impact of new developments in the European Monetary System on the monetary and financial arrangements of African countries and the need to accelerate monetary integration in Africa

39. The Conference of Ministers requested the Executive Secretary of ECA, the Secretary-General of OAU, the President of ADB and the Director-General of the African Centre for Monetary Studies to assist member States in monitoring the evolution of the international monetary systems, including the European Monetary System, and in evaluating their possible impact on the macroeconomic variables and integration of African countries, and called upon African countries to accelerate the ratification of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community.

Resolution 732 (XXVII). Information systems for African economic development and integration

40. The Conference of Ministers urged member States in order to receive delivery of PADIS' technical assistance in information system development to use their UNDP country indicative planning figure (IPF), to consider PADIS in their pledges to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development, further called upon member States to adopt policies related to the acquisition and utilization of appropriate information technology, and invited member States to declare 19 November as "African Development Information Day".

Resolution 733 (XXVII). Strengthening the follow-up mechanism of the Lagos Plan of Action in the 1990s

41. The Conference of Ministers reaffirmed its faith in and full adherence to the spirit of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos as Africa's basic programme for socio-economic development and transformation in the 1990s and beyond, called upon African countries to strengthen their machinery on the implementation, the follow-up and the monitoring of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos at national and subregional levels and to ensure that the objectives, strategies and priorities of the Lagos Plan of Action are fully incorporated in the objectives, strategies and priorities of national plans and subregional and regional programmes and plans of action.

Resolution 734 (XXVII). Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s

42. The Conference of Ministers urged member States to set up as soon as possible Needs Assessment/Programme Review and Strategy Development Teams to draw lessons from past experience and to identify needs and priorities, taking into account local conditions and the state of statistical development, and to formulate draft five- to ten-year national statistical development plans.

Resolution 735 (XXVII). Short-term economic forecasting in Africa

43. The Conference of Ministers requested the secretariat of the Commission to continue to strengthen and expand its work on the short-term economic forecasting in close collaboration with national planning organs, African multilateral institutions and research institutions so as to ensure that African countries have the necessary tools and skills for effective economic management.

Resolution 736 (XXVII). Women and access to resources in the 1990s

44. The Conference of Ministers recommended that ECA should facilitate the establishment of the Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs and requested the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Development Fund for Women to give financial, material and technical support for the setting up of a secretariat for the Federation, and recommended to the Executive Secretary of ECA, in collaboration with OAU and ADB, to study the possibility of creating an African Bank for Women.

Resolution 737 (XXVII). The role of women in conflict

45. The Conference of Ministers urged Governments to ensure that women are part of all peace initiatives and negotiations at all levels in their respective countries, supports the initiative of the Uganda Government to hold a Regional Conference on Women for Peace, which will give a forum to women leaders of the region to propose strategies for the establishment and maintenance of peace in the region and propose programmes for alleviating adverse effects of civil conflicts on women.

Resolution 738 (XXVII). Science and technology for development

46. The Conference of Ministers requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to prepare a report to be submitted to the next session of the Commission on the possibilities of the establishment of a conference of ministers of science and technology for development.

Resolution 739 (XXVII). Adoption of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa 5/

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 35/66 B of 5 December 1980 which had proclaimed the 1980s as the Industrial Development Decade for Africa,

Bearing in mind the report on the independent mid-term evaluation team of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa prepared by the members of the evaluation team, which had shown, inter alia, that the first Decade had not attained the expected results,

Recalling resolution 2 (X) adopted by the Conference of African Ministers

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5/ Morocco expressed its reservations in respect of the fourth, ninth and tenth preambular paragraphs.

of Industry at its ninth meeting, held from 29 May to 1 June 1989 at Harare, Zimbabwe, concerning the proclamation of a Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the formulation of a programme for the Decade,

Recalling also resolution AHG/Res.180 (XXV) of July 1989, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity requesting, inter alia, the proclamation of a Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa,

Recalling further resolution GC.3/10 of 23 November 1989, adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization at its third session, which had also called for the proclamation by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth regular session of a Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa,

Noting resolution 709 (XXVI) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa on the United Nations Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1991-2000) which, inter alia, had mandated the tenth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth regular session, through the Economic and Social Council, the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa, together with the recommendations concerning practical mechanisms of its implementation and monitoring and including modalities for the mobilization of funds needed to finance the programme at the national, subregional, regional and international levels,

Pointing out to the twenty-seventh meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa that, owing to the unanticipated postponement of the tenth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry from 10 to 12 June 1991 to 29 to 31 July 1991, it had not been possible to submit the programme of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session for 1991 held in July 1991 and, consequently, it had also not been possible to submit the programme to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth regular session,

Further recalling General Assembly resolution 44/237 of 22 December 1989 that had proclaimed 1991-2000 as the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and 20 November as Africa Industrialization Day,

Welcoming the signing of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community by the African Heads of State and Government of the OAU member States at Abuja, Nigeria, on 3 June 1991,

Mindful of the important implications of the said Treaty, especially its article 48 on industry,

1. Decides to adopt a programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1991-2000) covering the national, subregional and regional components contained in document CAMI.10/6:ICE/1991/6/vol.1 and vol.2;

2. Decides to establish a ten-member working group, to be appointed by the Conference of African Ministers of Industry each biennium, comprising the members of the current Bureau and five additional members representing each of the subregions, to monitor the progress made in implementing the programme;

3. Requests the secretariats of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Economic Commission for Africa, in coordination with other appropriate international financial and technical agencies and in conformity with the foreseen mechanisms in subregional and regional programmes, to ensure the implementation of the programme;

4. Requests the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to submit the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa to the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization at its fourth session, through the Industrial Development Board at its resumed eighth session;

5. Appeals to the fourth session of the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to endorse the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and to extend its full support to it by allocating adequate resources to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to assist African countries and subregional organizations in implementing both the national and subregional components of the programme;

6. Further requests the twenty-seventh session of the ECA Conference of Ministers to submit for adoption the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh regular session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session for 1992, and requests the Assembly to provide the Commission with increased resources to enable it to assist effectively African countries and subregional organizations in the implementation and monitoring of the programme at the national, subregional and regional levels;

7. Appeals to African countries and to African intergovernmental organizations, particularly financial institutions, to take the necessary measures to ensure the successful implementation of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and to give priority to the mobilization of their own financial resources for the implementation and monitoring of the programme;

8. Also appeals to the international community, particularly bilateral and multilateral funding institutions, to increase significantly their contributions to the industrial sector in African countries, so as to ensure a successful and sustained implementation of the programme;

9. Specifically urges international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank, to ensure full support to the programme of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa and its effective implementation at the national and subregional levels;

10. Further appeals to the United Nations Development Programme to allocate, under its regional component of the fifth programming cycle for Africa (1992-1996) of the Programme, adequate resources for supporting the activities of the programme;

11. Requests the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, in cooperation with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to undertake follow-up actions for promoting national, subregional and regional activities in support of the programme and jointly submit biannual reports on the implementation of the programme to the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa and the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, through the Conference of African Ministers of Industry.

Resolution 740 (XXVII). Human resources planning, development and utilization in Africa

47. The Conference of Ministers called upon the international community and the United Nations agencies to give full support to the strategy and priorities espoused in the Regional Framework for Human Resources Development and Utilization in Africa, and to make greater use of local consultants and expertise in development projects funded by them; and urged UNDP to implement the Pilot Programme on Integrated Human Resources Development.

Resolution 741 (XXVII). The work programme and budget of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development for 1992-1994

48. The Conference of Ministers urged all member States that have not yet done so to ratify the Constitution of the Centre as soon as possible and further urged member States to support the Centre by seconding their scientists for short periods and at their expense to participate in the implementation of the programmes of the Centre.

Decision 3 (XXVII). Second ordinary meeting of the Governing Board of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

49. The Conference of Ministers endorsed the amendments to articles (v) and (ix) of the Statute of the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) proposed at the second ordinary meeting of the Governing Board of UNAFRI.

Decision 5 (XXVII). Seventh meeting of the Joint Conference of Planners, Statisticians and Demographers: appointment of members of the Governing Council of the Institute for Economic Development and Planning

50. The Conference of Ministers approved the appointment of the Sudan, Tunisia, Burundi, Cameroon, Namibia, Guinea, Nigeria and Togo to the Governing Council of the Institute for Economic Development and Planning.

Decision 6 (XXVII). Thirteenth meeting of the African Regional Coordinating Committee (ARCC) on the Integration of Women in Development

(a) Recommendation for the nomination of an African woman Secretary-General for the fourth World Conference on Women

51. The Conference of Ministers requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint an African woman to the post of Secretary-General for the fourth World Conference on Women, to be held from 4 to 15 September 1995, at Beijing, China.

(b) Appointment of the members of the subregional and ARCC bureaux

52. The Conference of Ministers endorsed the appointment of members of the subregional and ARCC bureaux for the period 1992-1994.

(c) Agenda for the fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women

53. The Conference of Ministers took note of the draft agenda for the fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women.

II. WORK OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

A. Economic Commission for Europe

54. In the course of the past year events in Europe have been dominated by processes of integration in the West and disintegration in the East. Historic movements towards further integration are under way among the countries of Western Europe and in North America. The Single Market to be established by the end of 1992 within the European Community (EC) and the creation of an economic and monetary union as well as a political union, as decided at the recent Maastricht Summit, bear witness to the dynamic force of the EC, which is increasingly becoming the centre of gravity in the region and beyond. Evidence of this attraction is the decision of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) to form a "European Economic Area" with the EC, which will enter into force on 1 January 1993. Meanwhile, a number of EFTA countries have applied for membership of the European Community. The agreements of association that are being negotiated between the EC and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with the recognition in principle of full membership for some of those countries as the ultimate goal, underscore the forceful opening of the integration process to Eastern Europe.

55. The Free Trade Agreement between the United States of America and Canada, which came into force in 1991, created one of the world's largest free trade areas. Talks are under way to explore the possibility of extending the agreement to include Mexico, which could have far-reaching implications for the countries of Central America and the Caribbean.

56. The revolutionary events in the countries of Eastern Europe which characterized 1989 and 1990 were followed by the disintegration in 1991 of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia. These developments led to the emergence of a sizeable number of new States, many of which have already been recognized by or integrated into the international community. Europe has in a short space of time changed beyond recognition, posing major challenges both to the countries of the region and to international organizations and institutions active in the region.

57. The political reforms in certain multinational countries were accompanied by an upsurge of nationalist sentiment, ethnic violence and aspirations towards nationhood. The conflicts in Yugoslavia and certain states of the former Soviet Union have served to illustrate the magnitude of the problem. Newly elected Governments and parliaments of the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States are confronted with the unprecedented task of managing the transition from rigid political systems and centrally planned economies to pluralist democracies and market economies. In this complex, protracted and costly process the "countries in transition" applied a variety of approaches to suit the special needs and circumstances of their respective countries, ranging from shock therapy to gradualism. The difficulties became ever more apparent this past year. Levels of output continued to drop sharply even in the few countries where an upturn had been expected, and most people had to bear significant

cuts in their standard of living. The popular enthusiasm for a new order that characterized the political revolutions of 1989 gave way to feelings of anxiety and disappointment that the pace of economic change was unable to match the speed of political development.

58. The very sluggish development of the economy in the West and in the world as a whole has been a further complicating factor for the transition process in Central and Eastern Europe. For the world economy, 1991 was one of the worst years of the entire post-war period. Global output fell for the first time since 1945, and the growth rate of world trade fell for the third year in succession. Current forecasts point to only a marginal recovery in 1992.

59. For the new leaders of the countries in transition it has proved relatively easy to dismantle the old structures but extremely difficult to build the new. Fixed investment continues to fall rapidly in the transition economies and must be reversed if the reform process is to succeed and burgeoning unemployment levels are to be checked. There is a growing fear that the increasing economic strains will lead to disillusionment and impatience with both the idea of the market economy and the democratic process. Political leaders, not only in Eastern Europe but also in the West, have the task of preserving and reinforcing support for economic transformation in the face of increasing current hardships and the disappointment of initial expectations. In this task they need all the support they can possibly get of the international organizations and institutions.

60. It is generally accepted that the revolutions of 1989 were not foreseen. Moreover, in Germany the unexpected escalation in the budgetary costs of supporting reconstruction in the former German Democratic Republic has led to a sharp increase in inflationary pressures and, through higher German interest rates, is having a depressing effect on the prospects for the recovery of activity throughout Western Europe. The electorates in the West are ill-prepared for the scale of international assistance required to ensure that the transition processes become self-sustaining, and those in the East are also ill-prepared for the likely duration of their hardships. The political task of keeping the transition processes on course is now much more difficult than it was two years ago.

61. In 1991 the depression in Eastern Europe deepened further with domestic output levels falling on average by about 14 per cent. This followed an average fall of 10 per cent in 1990 and 2 per cent in 1989. Since 1988, the aggregate fall in output has been nearly 25 per cent. In surveying this general picture of collapsing output in Eastern Europe - a decline which appears to be on the scale of the depression of the 1930s - a number of considerations have to be borne in mind, including the quality of the statistics on which the picture is based. Although problems in this respect have been known for a long time, there has been a deterioration in the last few years as national statistical offices began to switch to new methods of collecting new sets of statistics.

62. The extent of the downturn in Eastern Europe was due largely to the introduction of major changes in relative price structures and the restrictive macroeconomic policies introduced to curb accelerating inflation and government budget deficits. The introduction of such policies in several countries at the same time coincided with the collapse of trade among the members of the former Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). The collapse of the CMEA trade and payments system and of the trade of Eastern European countries with the former Soviet Union had a major impact on the latter, causing among other things shortages of energy and other supplies due to severe foreign exchange constraints.

63. Given the tremendous proportions and complexities of the problems of economic and social transformation, the major efforts have to be made by the transition countries themselves. However, assistance of Western countries as well as of international organizations and institutions remains crucial. By June of 1991 financial commitments on the part of Western Governments in the context of the Group of 24 States assistance regarding Central and Eastern Europe had reached the substantial sum of $32 billion. However, actual disbursement of funds has on the whole been less rapid, and for certain recipient countries the amounts of assistance forthcoming have fallen short of urgent needs. With the most recent announcement by the Group of Seven industrialized States of a $24 billion assistance package for the Russian Federation, with other measures to follow for other member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the West has given a strong signal reaffirming its commitment to support economic transformation and help maintain the momentum of the domestic reform programmes.

64. The Washington Conference, held in January 1992 to provide assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States, brought the question of coordination of assistance, albeit to a more limited group of States, into the limelight. The invitation to the Washington Conference gave rise to an unprecedented series of consultations among United Nations agencies to formulate a coordinated position within the United Nations delegation to the Conference. The Follow-up Conference, hosted by the European Community and held at Lisbon from 23-24 May 1992, reinforced the programmes and modalities of assistance in the fields of food, health, shelter, energy and technical assistance.

65. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) has from its inception provided a forum for regionwide European and transatlantic dialogue and cooperation. In recent months, the CSCE process has again moved to centre stage in regional political negotiations with an agenda for a comprehensive concept of security and stability on the continent in the post-cold-war period. The Paris Charter for a New Europe, signed in November 1990, was a first important step in this direction. The process further evolved through the decision of the Berlin and Prague meetings of the CSCE Council of Foreign Ministers to organize a systematic flow of information between the CSCE secretariat and international organizations relevant to the CSCE process and to create a new "Economic Forum" within the framework of the Senior Officials' Meeting. The membership of the CSCE has this year increased to 52 countries, embracing all States of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

66. New "extra-institutional" processes have been initiated recently within the region originating from ad hoc political initiatives. The first of these was the Conference of Ministers of Environment convened in May 1991 at Dobris Castle in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, which agreed on a number of follow-up activities such as a European environment programme as well as another conference at the ministerial level which will take place in Switzerland towards the end of 1992 or at the beginning of 1993. Another such process was set into motion by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport meeting at Prague in October 1991 which, among other things, stressed the need for the elaboration of a pan-European transport concept and infrastructure programme. A third initiative was that of the Prime Minister of the Netherlands which led to the adoption in December 1991 of a European Energy Charter as a framework for the elaboration of legally binding agreements and protocols.

67. At the subregional level there has been an intensification and multiplication of cooperation. A belt of such subregional groupings stretches from the Arctic region and Baltic Sea area through the Central European Initiative (the former Hexagonale) and the Danube River Basin to the Balkans, the Black Sea area and the Mediterranean. These initiatives have in some cases led to forms of institutionalization such as the recently established Baltic Sea Council.

68. At its forty-seventh session in April 1992, the Economic Commission for Europe endorsed the decisions taken at its forty-fifth session, notably decision O (45) in which it defined environment, transport, statistics, trade facilitation and economic analysis as priority areas of activity. These were reflected in new decisions adopted by the session on questions of environment and sustainable development, cooperation in the field of transport, statistics and work on EDIFACT (Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport). A further decision was adopted on the Commission's work confirming the task of ECE to assist countries in transition to a market economy and their integration into the European and global economy. The decision endorsed the programme of workshops on practical issues relating to transition which has been carried out in the course of the past year and called for the further development of these activities, taking into account the special needs of the growing number of new members of the ECE. Yet another decision called for further economic cooperation in the Mediterranean region in the light of the Final Act of Helsinki (CSCE).

69. In the course of the past year, ECE has intensified its work in the field of environmental protection. Conventions on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents have been elaborated within the framework of the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems. Both conventions were adopted and signed in March 1992 by 22 and 23 countries, respectively, and the European Community.

70. In November 1991, the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) adopted a protocol concerning the Control

of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCS) or their Transboundary Fluxes, which to date has been signed by 21 countries. It established a Working Group on Strategies to prepare protocols on specific air pollutants, or groups of air pollutants. On the occasion of the signing of the VOC Protocol, a Ministerial statement was adopted, urging Parties, inter alia, to carry out timely negotiations leading to additional protocols to the Convention.

71. Steps were taken to strengthen cooperation between ECE and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with respect to management of chemicals, economic instruments of environmental policies and elaboration of environmental policy reviews for ECE countries non-members of OECD.

72. In 1991 progress was made towards the development of a coherent road transport system in Europe, inter alia, through the implementation of the revised European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews engaged in Road Transport (AETR). The new European Agreement on Important Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) was opened for signature and signed by 16 European Transport Ministers at the Conference held at Prague, from 29 to 31 October 1991. A substantial part of a new Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers was elaborated.

73. The analysis of traffic flows in three European North-South corridors was finalized and a traffic flow study in the north-eastern part of Europe ("Via Baltica" corridor) was launched in 1991. A Seminar on Road Safety was held on 23 and 24 March 1992 to evaluate the Road Safety Week, held in October 1990, and to prepare future action in this area, including a new international road safety campaign. A joint ECE/EC project on the assessment of the needs of transport infrastructure in the light of Eastern European developments was finalized. Work began on a study on the establishment of a network of main European inland waterways of international importance, with a view to the elaboration of a European Agreement (AGN).

74. The Conference of European Statisticians at its thirty-ninth session in June 1991 adopted a resolution on the fundamental principles of official statistics in the region. In the past year it also gave special attention to activities designed to assist countries in transition and their integration into the European and global economy. A Joint Programme Review (JPR) meeting between ECE, OECD and Eurostat was convened to avoid duplication in the statistical work programmes of these organizations.

75. Work was completed on the 1992 Compendium of Environment Statistics. In social and demographic statistics, consultations were held with Eurostat and the OECD for harmonization of future data collection on migration statistics. Back-to-back meetings on labour statistics were agreed upon among ECE, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and OECD. Publications on changing population age structures and on statistics of women are in preparation.

76. The Economic Survey of Europe in 1991-1992, published by ECE, contains a chapter on the latest developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and another on the economies of the former Soviet Union, as well as a study on privatization. The situation in the transition countries was also reviewed in The ECE Economies in Mid-1991, prepared for the second regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council in July 1991.

77. In the Economic Bulletin for Europe, volume 43, special attention was paid to the costs of transformation in terms of output, employment and social security, as well as to the collapse of the intra-CMEA trade and payments system and its impact on mutual trade of the economies in transition. The Bulletin drew special attention to the economic depression which had taken hold of the countries in transition and devoted a chapter to the external economic relations of the three Baltic States.

78. The development of the United Nations/EDIFACT messages is rapidly progressing within the framework of the EDIFACT Joint Rapporteurs Programme set up by the ECE Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures. At present United Nations/EDIFACT includes recommendations for 18 standard messages (UNSM) approved for implementation, 16 messages for trial use and 35 messages for information. This means that 69 electronic messages are now at various stages of introduction and cover various dimensions of international trade transactions, such as order, payments, transport, customs, construction, etc. Work has also continued on the development of an interregional project on international trade facilitation which will be implemented by the five regional commissions jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

79. A round table on problems and prospects of trade, payments and investment among the economies in transition was held in December 1991 during the session of the Committee on the Development of Trade. A Guide on "Legal Aspects of Privatization in Industry", prepared under the auspices of the Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry, was published in February 1992. Four issues of the East-West Joint Ventures News were published in 1991. A further study on "Promoting Foreign Direct Investment in the ECE Region" is being prepared for publication.

80. During its first year of operation in 1991, the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project executed nine events in eight countries. Three drafts were prepared for publication on selected energy efficient technologies, products and services; policies and programmes for energy efficiency; and a database of individuals, enterprises and institutions involved in trade and cooperation in energy efficiency. Following the session of the Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project, an Ad Hoc Meeting on Global Energy Efficiency 21 was held to facilitate information exchange on energy efficiency on a global scale. This will be included in Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

81. The High-Level Meeting on Cooperation and Sustainable Development in the Chemical Industries was held at Warsaw (Poland) on 10 to 12 March 1992, as a

follow-up to the Bergen Conference. It was organized in cooperation with the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) and with the support of the Commission of the European Communities, and was the first international conference on the subject with a genuine cross-sectoral approach gathering senior representatives from Governments, the chemical industry and regional and international organizations and institutions. The Meeting adopted conclusions reflecting the clear commitment of all partners to the common objective of promoting sustainable development, which have been submitted to the UNCED.

82. During the past year, the Commission intensified its cooperation and coordination of activities with other international organizations and European institutions active in the region with a view to avoiding duplication of work and to ensure the optimum use of resources. Close collaboration exists between the ECE and the European Community, EFTA, OECD, EBRD and the Council of Europe.

83. The ECE continued to make a meaningful contribution to global programmes of the United Nations. In the case of the UNCED, for example, the Bergen Conference on Action for a Common Future organized by the Government of Norway in cooperation with ECE in 1989 served as a model for the preparatory process in other regions. The Commission has submitted to the UNCED a compendium of its conventions in the field of environmental protection. It is also engaged in regional preparations for the World Conference on Population in 1994, for which it will organize a European Population Conference in 1993 jointly with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Council of Europe. Each year more than 30 countries from outside the ECE region participate actively in the work of the Commission, and the results of its work are made available to the developing countries of other regions.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

84. At its forty-seventh session in April 1991, the Commission, in adopting resolution 47/1 on the Seoul Declaration on Regional Cooperation, decided that "Regional economic cooperation in the ESCAP region: prospects, priorities and policy options" would be the theme topic for its forty-eighth session. One of the major policy issues discussed at the session of the Commission at Beijing was this theme. For the preparation of the theme topic, the secretariat convened an Intergovernmental Meeting on Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific (Beijing, 10-16 December 1991) which examined several aspects of regional cooperation, such as prospects for intraregional flows of investment and development finance, increasing complementarities and changing patterns of comparative advantage in the context of Asia and the Pacific, regional cooperation in science and technology, and the development of regional infrastructure. The secretariat had undertaken an in-depth study on the theme topic which formed the basis of the Meeting's deliberations. Its findings show that the growing interdependence at the regional and global levels has aroused much interest in increased regional economic cooperation as a means to address such basic issues as energy, complementarities in production and the

convergence of macroeconomic policies and productivity growth in the ESCAP region. The Meeting decided to establish a Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation within the subsidiary structure of the Commission. The report of the Meeting, submitted to the Commission for consideration, contains a number of important recommendations on the composition, modalities and terms of reference of the Committee which would govern its work as well as its steering group.

85. In compliance with the Commission's resolution 47/3, the secretariat also convened the Meeting of Senior Officials on the Intergovernmental Structure Subsidiary to the Commission at Bangkok in January 1992. This Meeting was convened to consider and finalize the recommendations to encompass the terms of reference, operational modalities, frequency of meetings and other relevant aspects of the revised subsidiary structure of the Commission. The main thrust of those recommendations was a shift from the present sectoral basis for the work of the Commission to a thematic approach in which a number of related issues are brought together under the purview of an important theme. The Meeting recommended the establishment of three thematic committees, two other committees, and two special bodies as compared to the seven sectoral committees currently in force. Corresponding to the changed subsidiary structure of the Commission, six thematic subprogrammes were also recommended as compared to 15 subprogrammes in the current medium-term plan. The report of this Meeting, together with a report by the Executive Secretary on assessment of the organizational, staffing and financial implications of the revised subsidiary structure, which was prepared pursuant to operative paragraph 4 of the above resolution, was before the Commission for its consideration and decision.

86. Pursuant to the deliberations of the General Assembly concerning the formulation of an international development strategy for the 1990s, the Commission at its forty-fifth session in 1989 had adopted resolution 45/1 on a regional development strategy towards the year 2000 and beyond. Towards the implementation of that resolution, the secretariat convened, with financial assistance from UNDP, an inter-agency consultation in June 1991 in order to seek the views of concerned United Nations agencies on the formulation of the regional development strategy. In July 1991, the Meeting of Eminent Persons on a Regional Social Development Strategy Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond was convened at Beijing to examine the draft strategy. The Fourth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Welfare and Social Development adopted the draft strategy at the Manila meeting in October 1991. The strategy as annexed to the Manila Declaration was presented to the Commission for its consideration. The major objectives of the strategy are aimed at further improving the quality of life of all people of the ESCAP region focusing on eradication of absolute poverty, realization of distributive justice and enhancement of popular participation. Areas of major concern cover a wide range of issues, such as social organization, the family, health and education, etc. The discussion at the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the International Development Strategy concentrated on the social development strategy.

87. The Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific has been issued at a time of profound economic and political changes in the world which will have far-reaching impact on the development of the ESCAP region. Part one of the Survey deals with the emerging socio-economic issues. Part two is devoted to a study of a topical subject of common concern to the developing countries of the ESCAP region concentrating on the problems of macroeconomic management and reform faced by them in recent years.

88. The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, had recommended that the results of regional conferences should be introduced to the preparatory process for the 1992 Conference. The ESCAP Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in October 1991, had recognized that sustainability of development could not be achieved in parts isolated from one another; it called upon ESCAP to reflect the regional perspectives, aspirations, views and interests fully in its input into the 1992 Conference. The secretariat undertook, for consideration by the Commission, an analytical study which outlines two major critical areas, namely, climate change and biological diversity which are the subjects of ongoing international negotiations. Countries of the ESCAP region are participating actively in these negotiations which are expected to lead to the adoption of global legal instruments. The study also calls attention, inter alia, to improvement of the quality of life, particularly the living and working environment of the poor, protection of health and the atmosphere by combating transboundary air pollution, protection of oceans and coastal areas, and rational use of marine living resources.

89. As a follow-up to Commission resolution 268 (XLIV) on shelter strategies towards the year 2000, the secretariat examined the current initiatives in shelter strategies in the ESCAP region by developing an analytical approach based on a questionnaire which applies some 14 indicators, such as political commitment to shelter, macroeconomic development policies, link between shelter objectives and settlement management, etc. The analysis reveals that, although most countries in the region have formulated national policies in shelter, efforts to develop and implement effective strategies still are lagging because of mounting socio-economic problems. The Commission was requested to guide the secretariat in the pursuit of further work in this critical area and, in particular, urged its members and associate members to renew their commitment to the goal of shelter towards the year 2000.

90. In compliance with the Commission's resolution 46/2 of 13 June 1990, the secretariat convened a Pre-Conference Consultation Expert Group Meeting for the Ministerial Conference on Urbanization in June 1991 to review the two important policy papers which had been prepared in cooperation with the World Bank and UNDP, and to finalize the secretariat's outline of the state of urbanization report. The report, which focuses on the problems of urban economy and productivity, urban poverty and environment, also contains some pertinent case-studies. A senior/expert group meeting is expected to examine the report in September 1992 before its submission to the Ministerial

Conference on Urbanization for its consideration in December 1992. A progress report on various activities carried out by the secretariat on the convening of the Conference was submitted to the Commission.

91. For the convening of the Ministerial Meeting of the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in August 1992, the secretariat held consultations with UNFPA and other concerned agencies. A Preparatory Committee, constituted jointly with UNFPA, met in late 1990 and decided on the theme of the Conference entitled "Population and sustainable development: goals and strategies into the twenty-first century". In connection with the holding of the Conference, three seminars were organized. Their focus was on environment and sustainable development, migration and urbanization interrelationships with socio-economic development, and planning and implementation of effective family planning/family health and welfare programmes. For effective inter-agency coordination of policy and organizational matters, a meeting of senior officials is expected to meet prior to the convening of the Ministerial Meeting in August 1992.

92. Towards the implementation of the Commission's resolution 47/10 on Phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, the secretariat prepared the first draft of the regional action programme on the basis of the modalities which had been worked out at the Inter-agency Consultative Group Meeting in December 1990. Several United Nations organizations participated in the formulation of the regional action programme, including the Asian Development Bank and Asia-Pacific Telecommunity. At its Geneva session in September 1991, the Inter-agency Working Group on Phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade considered the inputs from the developing member and associate member Governments and subregional organizations. The Commission provided further guidance to the secretariat regarding progress made so far in the formulation of the regional action programme and the additional steps required for its implementation. The strategy themes developed in the regional action programme centre on the critical issues of institutional and human resources development as well as the transport and communications operations and commercialization, with particular emphasis on the problems of urban transport and transport and communications in rural and remote areas.

93. With regard to strengthening the Commission's programme activities in the field of women in development, the secretariat initiated a number of projects on: (a) appraisal of the progress made in the ESCAP region regarding implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women; (b) forum for non-governmental organizations and their participation in the formulation and implementation of active proposals for advancing the status of women in the region; and (c) special assistance to facilitate the participation of the region's 11 least developed countries in the forthcoming Ministerial Conference on Women in Development in 1994. Pursuant to Commission resolution 46/6 of 13 June 1990, the secretariat convened an Inter-agency Meeting on Women in Development at Bangkok in August 1991. The major objective of this Meeting was to establish the modalities, the agenda and time-frame of the Conference in order to provide a focused discussion on

the critical regional issues and priorities in the field of women in development in line with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The Conference will have before it a thematic and structured agenda concentrating on women in economic and social development, and women and employment. It is expected that the Conference will adopt the regional plan of action for the advancement of women in Asia and the Pacific.

94. At its forty-eighth session at Beijing, the Commission considered the secretariat's progress report on its preparatory activities for convening the Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology at Tehran in June 1992. At its forty-seventh session, the Commission had deliberated on the theme of "industrial restructuring in Asia and the Pacific, in particular with a view to strengthening regional cooperation", and in its resolution 47/2 it adopted the "Seoul Plan of Action for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in Asia and the Pacific". As a follow-up, the secretariat convened the Meeting of Senior Officials on the Seoul Plan of Action at Beijing in November 1991. Based on the recommendations emanating from the deliberations of this Meeting, the Seoul Plan of Action will be revised before its presentation to the forthcoming Meeting of Ministers of Industry and Technology at Tehran. The Ministers' Meeting will focus on the critical issues, problems, constraints and prospects for accelerating industrial and technological development in Asia and the Pacific.

95. In recent years, major developments in the world economy have affected ESCAP's developing countries. The secretariat prepared two analytical papers which examine the implications for the developing countries in Asia and the Pacific of the establishment in 1992 of the single European market and of a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In particular, the outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which will set the agenda for the development of global trade in the 1990s and the opportunities and challenges it would provide for the ESCAP region, is the focus of critical examination. In this context, the special problems faced by the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries as well as problems of transition in the economies of the ESCAP region formed the basis of deliberations at the forty-eighth session of the Commission. In compliance with the provisions of the Commission resolution 46/7 of 13 June 1990, the secretariat developed a project, and jointly with UNDP, will organize a seminar in which participants from the least developed countries are invited to discuss and exchange views on such important issues as investment laws and policies, human resources development, institutions for implementing investment policies and physical infrastructure for investment. Similarly, the secretariat has carried out an in-depth study on the transitional problems of centralized planned economies to more decentralized market-oriented ones as well as war-ravaged economies of the ESCAP region. More importantly, the major developments of recent years resulting in the East-West détente and the disintegration of Eastern Europe and the Soviet bloc have created five independent Asia States that had been part of the former Soviet Union, and which have been recommended to be admitted as members of ESCAP. These developments are likely to transform the economic and social map of Asia, and they will impart the region with ever greater dynamism in the 1990s and beyond. The Commission looked into these problems and provided guidance and a policy framework for the Commission's future work in these merging areas.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

96. In the first place, it should be mentioned that preparatory work for the XXIV session of the Commission was undertaken through the preparation of a biennial inter-divisional report on the main topic to be discussed at the session entitled "Social Equity and Changing Production Patterns: An Integrated Approach".

97. Also, in addition to continuing making progress in other multidisciplinary and interdivisional activities, the interface between development and the environment was another important aspect of ECLAC's activities, and accordingly, special attention was given to the preparation of a background document and organization of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Mexico City, 4-7 March 1991), in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled for June 1992.

98. Efforts were also devoted to study the linkages between agriculture and industry in a few selected countries of the region, in particular on the subject of agro-industrial chains.

99. Throughout this biennium, work involved in monitoring the economic and social situation in the region was disseminated through technical publications such as the Economic Panorama, Preliminary Overview, Economic Survey and Social Panorama. These publications conveyed timely reference material highly regarded by officials of member Governments, regional organizations and academic institutions.

100. Technical cooperation activities with respect to review of fiscal policies were continued. As part of such activities, 15 technical reports were published on fiscal deficits and 11 on quasi-fiscal deficits. Most of the reports were on case-studies of countries of the region. The third regional seminar on fiscal policy, stabilization and adjustment (Santiago, Chile, 28-30 January 1991) examined the methodologies for measuring the public deficit and evaluating fiscal policy.

101. Initial preparations were made for a new project (RLA/89/001) on machinery and action to strengthen and promote the capital goods industry in the region; this project was approved by UNDP, and work on it began in July 1991, with attention focused initially on the establishment of national centres for coordinating output with the demand for capital goods.

102. With regard to export promotion, three studies were prepared on the export potential and limitations of small and medium-scale manufacturing enterprises in Chile, Paraguay and Peru in terms of EEC markets. Another document explored the export promotion experiences and policies of Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica.

103. In the field of services, four studies were conducted on international trade in services (insurance, construction and professional services and tourism). A study on producer services which focused specifically on the case of copper production in Chile was also carried out.

104. In the area of economic integration and regional cooperation, a meeting of experts on macroeconomic policy coordination as a factor in terms of integration in Latin America and in Europe was held at Santiago, Chile, on 28 and 29 October 1991. Three documents as well as a final report were prepared for this meeting.

105. In the sphere of mineral resources, the work focused on research projects and the preparation of the corresponding documents for the Technical Meeting for the Analysis of Intraregional Trade and the Development of the Mining and Metallurgical Sector, which was held at Lima in July 1991.

106. The main activities carried out in the area of water resources, were the design of a model programme of training courses on integrated water resource management. Two subregional seminars in the Caribbean and Central America to examine training needs (St. Michael, 10 and 11 April 1991, and San José, 4 to 6 December 1991) were carried out.

107. In the field of human settlements, activities have focused on four main areas: urban management, the design of a statistical system to support the development of information gathering, processing and dissemination systems to be used by national authorities in formulating policies and programmes in the area of human settlements and housing, to improve the efficiency of the construction industry and guidelines are being formulated for a study on mechanisms and instruments used to finance housing and urban development.

108. The Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) is the institution within the ECLAC system in charge of the Latin American and Caribbean regional population programme. Technical assistance was provided to the countries with respect to the processing of their population and housing censuses, stressing the long-term use of the 1990 round of censuses by the public and private sectors at both the national and subnational levels. For this purpose, CELADE developed the REDATAM systems (retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer), used in more than 20 countries of the region, and the new REDATAM-Plus system (REDATAM, plus a multidisciplinary database and interface with geographical information systems).

109. The Social Development Division advanced in several fields. First, in the analysis of social change, the main achievements were the elaboration, with the support of the Statistics and Projections Division, of a report on the social situation in the region, based on information gathered through household surveys, and the research done on the values and attitudes of different social actors in the face of technological change.

110. As regards activities related to the integration of women into development, studies were done on several aspects of this topic, such as the

position of women with respect to technological change, culture and work; the situation of adolescent mothers; legal and institutional problems affecting women; and changes in models of socialization, among others. Advisory missions were also carried out in several countries of the region and seminars were organized on women's issues. Most of the Division's activity in this field revolved around the preparation and implementation of the fifth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Curaçao, September 1991) and meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Conference.

111. With regard to statistical information at the regional level, the most noteworthy efforts included preparations for the creation of a data bank on economic trends in response to the many requests received from Governments; the incorporation of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System into the External Trade Data Bank for Latin American and the Caribbean (BADECEL), which involves the adoption of new international classifications; the expansion of the number of variables related to capital formation in the System of National Accounts (SNA); preparations for a research project on prices, in order to study the comparative advantages of the countries of the region; and coverage of an increased number of countries in the Household Survey Bank (BADEHOG).

112. In the field of transport, support was given to the countries of the region in analysing aspects related to the transport, distribution, marketing and competitiveness of their exports.

113. A key achievement was the research done on the relation between structural changes in ports and the competitiveness of Latin America's foreign trade, which was published in the Cuadernos de la CEPAL series, No. 65. Given their importance, these results were widely disseminated through a series of national seminars on the question in almost every country of the region.

114. The activities carried out by the subregional headquarters of ECLAC in Mexico and Central America, focused on economic recovery, liberalization, international trade, development, sectoral transformation, poverty and social equity; elaboration of yearly economic surveys; and support for activities under the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America (PEC), particularly in the energy sector.

115. Measures for structural adjustment and coordination of macroeconomic policies were also analysed to assist cabinet meetings on the economy in Central American countries. Notes were published on the economic situation in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama, and on the progress of Central American economic integration.

116. A document was elaborated on changing production patterns and generating income for the poor, to be presented at the Eleventh Summit of Central American Presidents. Studies continued on the situation of low-income populations in some Central American countries, to support the formulation of

poverty-reduction strategies. In addition, the role and impact of remittances sent from abroad by Central American emigrés was analysed, to examine the application of such funds to savings, investment and stimulation of production.

117. The subregional headquarters for the Caribbean focused its attention on the analysis of issues relevant to the promotion of socio-economic development in CDCC countries and the initiation and implementation of projects dealing with such issues. Notable among these activities were the various advisory services related to food security, macroeconomic frameworks and medium-term development plans, the seminar on project data banks and public investment programming, and the overall contribution to the preparation and implementation of the First Regional Economic Conference for the Caribbean (Port of Spain, 22 to 29 February 1991).

118. The Caribbean Documentation Centre and the Patent Information and Documentation Unit continued to process and disseminate valuable information and documentation to the Governments of the subregion, as well as to private-sector agents, covering a broad range of social, economic and technical issues.

119. In summary, all ECLAC efforts were oriented to foster the cooperation among the countries of the region, both at the governmental and at the entrepreneurial level; as well as towards the study and dissemination of fruitful national experiences in support of the increased international competitiveness of productive systems.

D. Economic Commission for Africa

120. The following are some highlights of activities of ECA which were carried out during the period of 27 April 1991 to 19 April 1992.

121. In the field of social development, the secretariat prepared a report on Social Development and Policy Challenges in Africa. The study analysed the status of social development covering social issues such as education, health/nutrition, employment, incomes, poverty, and the status of vulnerable sections of the population. It made a number of policies, recommendations and suggestions that the 1990s must centre around working out modalities for improving the social sector, if long-term structural transformation and development were to become a reality. The report was presented to and discussed by the VI meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs in May 1992.

122. The secretariat also carried out a survey of economic and social conditions in the African least developed countries (1990-1991) which provided a detailed account of the structure of gross domestic product (GDP), developments of the major economic sectors, including an assessment of trade and balance of payments, debt and development, finance flows and policies pursued in the African least developed, island and land-locked countries.

123. In the area of regional cooperation and integration, the secretariat focused its activities on the assistance to the intergovernmental organizations responsible for economic integration. This assistance was mainly provided through the three multi-sectoral projects for the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC). When completed, those projects would enable them to depart from routine activities and submit to their policy organs a set of prefeasibility and feasibility studies on the basis of which key projects would be launched in priority areas.

124. In the field of agricultural development policy, planning and programming, the secretariat undertook a number of activities aimed at promoting increased agricultural development in the region. To that end, guidelines on the establishment of closer coordination between sectoral planning strategies have been produced. The main objective of these was to define agricultural planning approaches and synchronize them with those of other sectors in the context of the region's overall economic setting.

125. In the area of food security, besides its contribution to the regional workshop organized by the Islamic Development Bank on food security, the secretariat prepared a technical publication on the impact of structural adjustment programmes on the food situation in the West African subregion.

126. During the period under review, in the area of statistics, the secretariat continued to respond to the continuing and growing need for reliable and up-to-date data. Measures were taken to improve the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of demographic, social, economic and environment statistics at the national level. In addition, the secretariat carried a special assignment relating to the processing of the ECA survey for the final review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (1986-1990).

127. In the area of human resources development, the secretariat provided assistance to ECA member States in their efforts to strengthen and improve the planning, managing, monitoring and evaluating of human resources development and utilization. This assistance was provided through technical publications and other related studies, organizing and conducting training workshops, seminars and conferences at the national, subregional and regional levels for senior government officials and personnel, as well as those from private, parastatal and non-governmental organizations.

128. In the area of public administration and finance, the secretariat provided assistance to member States in their efforts to improve and strengthen public administration and management systems, institutions and processes; the performance of public enterprises; and public financial management.

129. In the field of the advancement of women, the secretariat concentrated its efforts on three major areas: participation of women in development, increasing women's skills and opportunities and information network on women in development. Emphasis was put throughout the period on the enhancement of women's productive resources and capabilities and on the establishment of women's groupings around common interests. The secretariat also carried out research work, organized experts meetings, workshops and seminars, which contributed to widen the database on women and to promote exchange of ideas on issues that could influence the lives as well as working conditions of African women.

130. As far as natural resources were concerned the secretariat undertook some activities aimed at working out problems facing the African Regional Centre for Solar Energy. A study on modalities for strengthening institutional arrangements for management in the energy sector was undertaken in view of the fact that the energy sector in African countries suffers from a weak and poor coordinated institutional infrastructure. The paper based on a case study of the energy sector in Zambia and Zimbabwe provides advice on a number of issues related to the management structure of the energy sector in African countries.

131. Assistance to the Energy Commission of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) was rendered on the rationalization of petroleum products supply and distribution in Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire.

132. In the area of development of water resources, the focus was on: (a) research and analysis of policy, planning and development strategy; (b) providing technical advisory services; (c) organizing and convening intergovernmental regional meetings; and (d) enhancing regional cooperation and promoting information exchange. In that respect a comprehensive study on the progress on the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan in Africa including the international drinking water supply and sanitation decade, was carried out to review and appraise the achievements made and identify the needs, as well as the constraints and problems encountered over the past 15 years.

133. In the area of cartography and remote sensing, the secretariat provided administrative support and advisory services to subregional institutions such as the Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (RECTAS), the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS) and the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS).

134. As far as science and technology was concerned, the secretariat organized the seventh meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Science and Technology Development (IGCESTD) from 4 to 8 November 1991, which adopted a number of recommendations on action required at the national level to strengthen endogenous capacities in science and technology, paying particular attention to policy institutions, financing and new materials technologies.

135. During the period under review, as part of its efforts to promote industrial development, the secretariat prepared a number of technical publications that contain a number of recommendations on strengthening the regional mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration among member States, United Nations agencies and organizations, bilateral and multilateral financing institutions and other intergovernmental organizations concerned. In July 1991, it organized and serviced as lead agency, the tenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Industry at Dakar, Senegal, and the preceding meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Whole on Industrialization in Africa jointly with UNIDO and OAU in cooperation with the Government of Senegal. The Conference approved the programme of the Second United Nations Industrial Decade for Africa and made a number of resolutions and decisions dealing with measures and actions to be taken for the implementation of the programme in terms of resources mobilization and other factor inputs.

136. In the area of basic industries, a number of technical publications and reports dealing with chemical industries were prepared, such as on assessment of trends in technological innovations in the production and use of pesticides and fertilizers in Africa.

137. In the area of trade and development finance, the secretariat organized at Lusaka, Zambia, in September 1991 a meeting of African Ministers of Trade Preparatory to the Eighth Session of UNCTAD, which was preceded by a meeting of senior officials. The meeting of Ministers adopted the Lusaka Declaration, together with the African negotiating position on the agenda items for the eighth session of UNCTAD.

138. In respect of monitory and financial issues, the secretariat substantially serviced the fourth session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, which took place in December 1991 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

139. During the period under review in the area of population, the secretariat continued to address population issues in line with the needs of member States as expressed in the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action for African Population and Self-reliant Development (KPA) and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990, as well as the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (1986-1990). The technical publications produced included manuals for the integration of population variables into development plans in African countries at the macro level and in the agricultural sector, and a statistical compendium on contraceptive prevalence and practice in African countries.

140. The Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) concentrated its work on technical publications, the organizations of legislative meetings and the production of other technical material. The publications included eight issues of its Newsletter on development information, quarterly and cumulative issues of DEVINDEX-AFRICA, and biennial editions of the Directory of African Experts and of the Directory of Development Institutions in Africa.

141. In the field of transport, the secretariat provided advisory services and technical support to member States and organizations, on request, towards facilitation of transport transit, traffic, particularly with regard to multimodal transport, shipping, and road transport. Some technical assistance was also provided on creation of a maritime transport data bank for Cameroon and for the member countries of Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA) and as the short and long-term Work Programme for the Port Management Associations.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

142. On 11 August 1991, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) officially resumed its activities which had been disrupted as a result of the Gulf crisis and the consequent temporary repatriation of staff for a period of almost one year from August 1990. The regrouping of staff at Amman, albeit not under normal working conditions, still enabled ESCWA to streamline its activities. As a consequence, activities of little or no bearing on the revised medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 were terminated; those of a continuous nature were maintained and postponed to the biennium 1992-1993. Other elements were reformulated either to lay the groundwork for activities programmed under the 1992-1993 biennium or to make their implementation possible within the time constraint of the remainder of the budget period and that of the working conditions. Thus, by the end of 1991, ESCWA was able to complete 44 per cent of its programmed activities apart from a host of additional activities dictated by the turn of events in the ESCWA region.

143. Owing to conditions of instability in the ESCWA region, the sixteenth session of the Commission, originally scheduled to take place at Baghdad in April 1991 and rescheduled for April 1992 at Manama, had to be postponed further until September 1992. Likewise, the preparation of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was delayed for one year. It was, however, completed in September 1991 as the first seminal document issued after regrouping.

144. Several activities within the 1992-1993 programme budget were based on new trends and developments in the region. Thus, activities on the Gulf crisis and its aftermath, which were addressed on an ad hoc basis in the 1990-1991 biennium, were formally instituted in the biennium 1992-1993. The Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and their implications for the region also received their share of attention. Other new developments in the region such as the unification of the two Yemens and its implications were emphasized. The problem of the large number of returnees due to the Gulf crisis was under serious study by ESCWA with the objective of recommending measures to integrate the returnees into the economies of the receiving countries. Major economic developments such as the implications for the region of a single European market in 1992 and those of other new economic groupings were also addressed in the 1992-1993 programme budget. In response to the region's need to address the problem of rehabilitation of war-damaged countries, activities dealing with this issue were incorporated in the programme budget.

145. In this connection, the Executive Secretary visited Lebanon in March 1992 to determine with the Lebanese authorities areas in which ESCWA could assist Lebanon in the process of reconstruction. Six priority activities were agreed upon for ESCWA's contribution; work in these areas has already been initiated. Other visits to member countries were also undertaken to strengthen cooperation, especially in light of recent developments. High-level contacts were intensified with the League of Arab States and other regional institutions with the objective of cementing joint activities.

146. In its effort to explore new prospects for Arab regional cooperation in the 1990s, ESCWA and the Arab Thought Forum jointly organized a seminar on the subject at Cairo in September 1991 to address this issue in the light of new economic developments.

147. A meeting to review the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 was held at Cairo in February 1992 to study the Plan and review it in the light of new regional and global developments. This resulted in the introduction of the necessary changes in the Plan to enable ESCWA to keep abreast of emerging conditions.

148. In its various fields of competence, ESCWA undertook the following activities:

(a) In the domain of food and agriculture, it continued to disseminate information through the issuance of its publication "Agriculture and Development in Western Asia", two issues of which were completed. Two operational activities aimed at combating and controlling desertification were also completed. Two other projects are under way;

(b) Under the Development Planning Division, a total of eight studies on different aspects of the Gulf crisis were undertaken as additional activities that addressed the consequences of this crisis for the region. Further, a study on the role of the Arab economy in the world economy in the 1990s was undertaken owing to the drastic economic changes that beset the world in the 1990s, such as new economic groupings, a unified European market in 1992, etc., and the need of the countries of the region to determine their position vis-à-vis these new developments. In terms of advisory services, the Development Planning Division participated in a multidisciplinary mission composed of ESCWA staff to the Republic of Yemen to assist the Government in the assessment of the feasibility of establishing Aden as a free-zone area. It also participated in the study of a framework of adequate macroeconomic policies in Lebanon and attended the twenty-eighth meeting of the Committee for Development Planning at Kuwait from 18 to 22 April 1992;

(c) The energy programme completed a directory of new and renewable sources of energy in its efforts to assist the Host Centre of the Regional Information Network on New and Renewable Sources of Energy in promoting its work. The programme also sponsored a training workshop on the design, construction, operation and maintenance of biogas units for rural areas, which was held at Damascus from 3 August to 3 September 1991. Further, a report to

the Commission was completed on the implementation of projects formulated in the course of the biennium 1988-1989 on renewable sources of energy. An interregional symposium on gas developments and market prospects by the year 2000 and beyond was held at Damascus;

(d) In its efforts to promote environmental issues, the major ESCWA activity consisted of regional and global preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This involved active participation on the part of ESCWA in concluding the ESCWA region's input into UNCED at Brazil in June 1992. This involved the preparation of working documents for the Arab Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, which was held at Cairo from 10 to 12 September 1991 and which was co-sponsored by ESCWA, the League of Arab States and UNDP. It was concluded with the adoption of the Arab Declaration on Environment and Development and Future Prospects. The ESCWA contribution to the Arab Ministerial Conference consisted of six sectoral papers and three working documents. Moreover, four interdisciplinary projects were identified in various areas within the context of activities aimed at identifying, formulating and backstopping environmental projects in the ESCWA region. These were: assessment of water resources in the ESCWA region using remote sensing techniques (in conjunction with the natural resources programme); a joint project with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on strengthening environmental planning in Jordan; a regional survey of material harmful to the ozone layer (in cooperation with the industrial development programme); and the formulation of a national plan of action to combat desertification (as a joint activity with the Food and Agriculture Programme and UNEP;

(e) Within the human settlements programme, two technical publications, one on appropriate human settlements planning in the ESCWA region and the other on the human settlements situation, are being finalized; and efforts are under way to organize a symposium on the social and cultural context of physical planning in the ESCWA region and an expert group meeting on finance and management of low-cost housing;

(f) Under the industrial development programme, one of the major activities completed was initiated in response to emerging conditions in the region. It consisted of a meeting and a report to the Commission on the absorption of returnees, with special emphasis on opportunities in the industrial sector given the drastic and fast-changing conditions in the region in the wake of the Gulf crisis and the necessity of addressing the issue of return migration. This activity assumed a multidisciplinary character and involved contributions from other programmes that tackled economic and social issues relevant to returnees. Other activities included substantive servicing of an expert group meeting on issues of managing technological change within the domain of Arab electronics firms, and an ongoing joint project with UNDP, consisting of the preparation of a regional project document on entrepreneurship as part of a series of activities undertaken on the subject;

(g) The natural resources programme completed three publications, one on the implementation of the Mar-del-Plata Action Plan in the ESCWA region: the

administrative, institutional and legislative aspects of water resources with a view to formulating a strategy during the 1990s to implement the Plan in terms of water resources management in the region; the second on a water resources database for the region; and the third on water loss prevention measures in irrigation schemes in the region;

(h) With regard to the dissemination of information on population, the population programme published the "Population Bulletin of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia" which combined three issues. It also completed several studies covering population and labour issues, such as the population situation in the ESCWA region; the employment situation and labour market developments in the agricultural sector in Western Asia; proceedings of an expert group meeting on socio-economic implications of return labour migration; the development of a comparative study of the education and training systems in selected Arab countries; and a database on the labour force in the ESCWA region. Furthermore, advisory services were rendered to four countries of the ESCWA region in establishing manpower and information units in these countries;

(i) The social development programme, in pursuance of its activities in the field of disability, completed the proceedings of the Conference on the Capabilities and Needs of the Disabled. In the area of social security, a study was issued on the review of social security systems in the ESCWA region. As regards activities connected with women and development, the social development programme continued to support technical activities for the development of women, for a total of eight projects. A number of studies on women were also completed, including a study on the assessment of the impact of socio-economic changes on the Arab family; a profile of Arab professional women for activities in the field of technical cooperation among developing countries, and a study on working women in Western Asia. The latter study was undertaken to address the increased participation of women in the labour force in the region owing to the fast-changing socio-economic conditions;

(j) The statistics programme, in its efforts to assist member States in various surveys and to coordinate its efforts with other statistical bodies, participated in a number of meetings and undertook missions for that purpose. This included participation in the meeting of the Statistical Commission of the Council of Arab Economic Unity; the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC); the United Nations inter-agency mission to Beirut, Lebanon; meetings for rehabilitation of statistics in Lebanon with the competent Lebanese authorities; and a mission to the Palestinian Statistical Bureau in Damascus to review the preparatory phase of the survey on children in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon;

(k) In the field of transport and communications, six publications were completed dealing with issues of land and maritime transport and communications. These included a manual on the appraisal of transport projects; training needs of the transport sector in Western Asia; problems and issues of road maintenance in the ESCWA region; utilization of port capacities in Western Asia for transport authorities and planners; a Transport Bulletin;

and trends in container traffic development in the region. Efforts are being made to resume activities in Western Asia pertaining to the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1985-1994);

(l) Finally, in the framework of its technical assistance activities to enhance regional cooperation, ESCWA signed agreements and memoranda of understanding with a number of regional institutions.

149. Cooperation in formulating and implementing joint activities also took place with the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other regional entities. Close cooperation was also agreed upon with UNIDO, UNEP, ECA and ECE in the context of the Inter-Regional Symposium on Gas Development and Market Prospects by the Year 2000 and Beyond.

150. Joint project coordination and cooperation also took place between ESCWA and the Arab Industrial Development and Metallurgical Organization, with the Islamic Foundation for Science and Technology Development (IFSTAD), with the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils (FASRC), and with AGFUND in the context of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), which is currently assisted financially by AGFUND.

151. Other ongoing ESCWA-executed projects include pre-investment studies on the establishment of engineering infrastructure.

152. In addition to the regional activities mentioned above, the secretariat, in order to promote and strengthen regional cooperation, has through the regional advisory services programme assisted member States in strengthening national and regional institutions in the following main areas: agriculture, data processing, energy, environment, human resources development, industrial development, national accounts and economic statistics, science and technology, sampling, transport and communications, and water resources development.

III. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF ILLEGAL TRAFFIC IN TOXIC AND DANGEROUS PRODUCTS AND WASTES

153. The General Assembly, by its resolution 44/226, requested the regional commissions to report to the Economic and Social Council, as from 1990, on the implementation of section I of the resolution which calls for each regional commission to contribute to the prevention of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes by monitoring and making regional assessments of the illegal traffic and its environmental and health implications on a continuing basis. As requested, in 1990, in the context of the Secretary-General's report on regional cooperation (E/1990/84, sect. V), the regional commissions reported for the first time to the Council on the status of the implementation of the resolution. In 1991, the regional commissions again reported to the Council, this time in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on traffic in and disposal, control and transboundary movements of toxic and dangerous products and wastes (E/1991/77). As stated

in the previous reports, the regional commissions had found that it would be very difficult to undertake any meaningful activities aimed at the implementation of the resolution from within existing resources. This unfavourable situation continues to prevail. It should be noted, however, that in his report on the prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes (A/CONF.151/PC/88 and Add.1) the Secretary-General of UNCED reported on one joint project that has been initiated between ESCAP and UNEP.

IV. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS TO PROMOTE SUBREGIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

154. The Economic and Social Council considered this subject in depth during its second regular session of 1991. In the light of the ongoing discussion about the restructuring and revitalization of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, particularly during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and taking into account the changes already introduced by the Secretary-General regarding the central departments dealing with economic and social issues, the Council agreed with the proposal of the executive secretaries that this subject be further considered in depth at its current session.

155. The present section of the report is divided into two parts. Part A provides background information to facilitate the discussion on the subject selected for in-depth consideration by the Economic and Social Council. Part B contains an account of the action taken at the respective commission sessions to provide specific inputs in response to General Assembly resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992 adopted by the Assembly at its resumed forty-sixth session and entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields". Paragraph 6 of the annex to the resolution states:

> "The regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Their effectiveness should be strengthened. The regional commissions, particularly those located in developing countries, should also be strengthened in terms of their activities and participation in operational activities of the United Nations system, bearing in mind the overall objectives of the restructuring and the revitalization process and taking into account paragraph 3 (h) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 45/264. In this context, the regional commissions are requested to provide recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session."

A. Why the regional commissions should be strengthened

156. The strengthening of the role of the regional commissions must be viewed in the broader context of the current restructuring effort aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the system vis-à-vis the most salient items of the new development agenda, such as the globalization of certain technological innovations, the persistence of poverty, and the new institutional requirements to cope with the efficient management of economic and social processes. At the same time, the unique capabilities of the regional commissions in the system must be fully recognized and taken into account in any restructuring process.

157. Considering that most of the issues in the new development agenda are of a cross-sectoral nature, a multi-disciplinary and regional approach has become increasingly important both in terms of dealing with differentiated social and economic problems and as a basis for promoting concerted action among Member States. The success of the United Nations system at the regional level is heavily dependent on concerted and coordinated action throughout the system, within the framework of an integrated approach to development. With that in mind, the Governments of the regions have entrusted to the commissions multi-disciplinary programmes of work in a wide variety of high priority development issues, such as, inter alia, poverty alleviation, integrated rural development, regional economic cooperation, the socio-economic effects of the debt crisis, science and technology for development, and environmental protection and sustainable development.

158. The capacity of the regional commissions to carry out such a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach has long been recognized by member Governments, in view of the greater proximity they have to the countries in their regions. In this context the regional commissions will be called upon to play an increasingly active role in promoting regional and subregional initiatives for cooperation. In order to ensure that United Nations activities in the economic and social sectors remain relevant to the changing needs and concerns of member States, greater regionalization and subregionalization of the system can be expected to occur.

1. The regional commissions within the United Nations system

159. The regional commissions, over the years, have sought to develop a wide range of activities in the economic and social sectors in keeping with their role as the "main general economic and social development centres" as mandated by General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977. Their in-house multi-disciplinary capability has been a special asset, enabling them to undertake interdisciplinary issues for in-depth consideration. This has also equipped them to carry out, although not always without difficulty, the responsibility assigned to them by the General Assembly for coordinating various activities and for exercising their role as "team leader".

160. Based on the experience so far, the regional commissions believe that closer coordination between them and the United Nations agencies should be maintained and strengthened. Generally, coordination with agencies has proven to be effective when it is institutionalized through joint staff arrangements. All the commissions, to varying degrees, manage joint units with specialized agencies, in fields like agriculture, industry, and environment. Similar arrangements exist for human settlements and transnational corporations. In other areas, the commissions hold joint meetings with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, undertake joint programming exercises, make substantive contributions to their activities, maintain regular exchanges of information and share their databases.

161. It is to be noted that the regional commissions have developed a variety of mechanisms and arrangements for inter-agency coordination in their role as team leader under General Assembly resolution 32/197. Such arrangements include the establishment of inter-agency committees and task forces on various multisectoral subjects, such as rural development and environment, as well as ad hoc consultative arrangements for implementation of various special decades' programmes and activities which involve several agencies. These have been beneficial in avoiding duplication and in enhancing complementarity in joint planning of activities.

162. The relationship between the regional commissions and the funding agencies of the United Nations system is particularly important. In certain cases, however, potential for conflict in jurisdiction and responsibility (specially in operational activities) could arise if the traditional role and mandate of the regional commissions are surpassed by the efforts of global bodies to extend their regional presence. Greater coordination in the process of setting priorities would thus appear necessary, particularly when regional projects and activities are submitted to Governments for approval. Likewise, there is the need to eliminate any impression vis-à-vis member Governments that the secretariats of the regional commissions and the funding agencies are in competition. There is growing concern, however, that by increasing their in-house expertise and acquiring the same intersectoral and multi-disciplinary characteristics of the regional commissions, the funding agencies will inevitably produce duplication.

163. One basic question that has been encountered by the regional commissions in recent years in their relationship with the funding bodies, such as UNDP and UNFPA, relates to the nature of their respective roles as mandated by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The general premise has been that in the interest of efficiency and economy, mobilization of resources should be left to a few organizations, such as UNDP, UNFPA and the World Food Programme (WFP), while the execution of substantive activities should be assigned to other entities in the system.

164. A concern that has emerged in the relationship between the regional commissions and funding bodies in recent months has been the tendency on the part of the latter to organize substantive meetings at regional levels of a nature directly infringing on the traditional role and mandate of the regional

commissions. This further reinforces the need for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to consider and redefine the relationship and the respective mandates of the two sets of organizations.

165. In paragraph 21 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197, it is stated, inter alia, that regional commissions "should provide inputs for the global policy-making processes of the competent United Nations organs". It may be recalled in this connection that the practice of holding regional preparatory meetings for world conferences or follow-up meetings to these events, convened by regional commissions, has been well established for many years.

2. Strengthening the role of the regional commissions in operational activities

166. Development activities of the United Nations should not be fragmented in such a way that individual national efforts negate one another. In decentralizing programmes, global activities should concentrate upon effective policy coordination and guidance, fully recognizing the competence of the regional commissions in performing the role of intergovernmental forums in setting priorities and determining the most relevant activities to meet the needs in their respective regions. The continued duplication of efforts, particularly at the level of technical advisory services, give cause for concern.

167. The regional commissions are being called upon by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to undertake activities in various areas requiring multi-disciplinary, subregional, regional and intercountry treatment which have not been their traditional fields of activities. While welcoming the trust placed in the capabilities of the regional commissions by these highest forums, two facts are striking: first, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council so far have not given consideration as to how resources for carrying out the assigned tasks would be mobilized, nor have they made provision for additional resources to be allocated to the regional commissions for the purpose; second, the regional commissions are not consulted to elicit their capabilities and the priorities determined by their membership at the regional level.

168. The regional commissions are increasingly being called upon to undertake to assist countries in their transition to market economies as well as to countries undertaking economic restructuring. Further, with the solution of regional conflicts, the role played by the regional commissions to assist the reconstruction and development of the war-ravaged economies in the early years of their formation is gaining renewed focus. The close cooperation and coordination of the regional commissions with non-United Nations institutions and organizations active in their respective regions is of paramount importance to ensure the full integration of the organization in development assistance programmes in the economic and social fields.

169. There is a concurrent need to examine the various areas of programming administrative and management practices to strengthen the role of the regional commissions in enhancing their capabilities to respond more effectively to the needs of their membership. Some of these areas are:

(a) The priority setting for programming should fully reflect the views of the regional commissions themselves;

(b) Some budgetary provision should be made to the regional commissions to enable at least their neediest members to attend commission sessions;

(c) Regarding the budgetary process, the participation of the regional commissions, accounting for about 45 per cent of the budget of the Economic and Social Council sector, in Headquarter's programming and budgeting review mechanism, like the Programme Planning and Budgeting Board, is essential.

B. Regional commissions' response to General Assembly resolution 46/235

170. Economic Commission for Europe: since the session of the Commission concluded its work at the same time that the General Assembly adopted its resolution 46/235, ECE was not in a position to respond to the request at that time. The Commission adopted decision A (47) entitled "The work of the commission as a whole and its future activities", but specific proposals to Assembly resolution 46/235 will still have to be worked out.

171. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: at its forty-eighth session, the Commission, in response to General Assembly resolution 46/235 adopted resolution 48/12 relating to the role and functions of ESCAP. The text of the resolution is reproduced below:

"The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

"Taking note of section IV of the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/235 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields and particularly paragraph 6, in which it was stated that the effectiveness of the regional commissions should be strengthened and that the regional commissions, particularly those located in developing countries, should also be strengthened in terms of their activities and participation in operational activities of the United Nations system, and in which the regional commissions were requested to provide recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session,

"Directs the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission to study the above-mentioned resolution and to respond on behalf of the Commission through the Executive Secretary to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session."

172. As can be seen, the final response of ESCAP to General Assembly resolution 46/235 will be submitted directly to the General Assembly after deliberations are completed in the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

173. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean: in response to General Assembly resolution 46/235, ECLAC, during its twenty-fourth session held at Santiago, discussed in depth the role and functions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. On 15 April 1992, the Ministerial segment of that session adopted resolution 520 (XXIV), which is reproduced below:

"The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

"Recalling General Assembly resolutions 40/237, 41/213 and 43/174 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations,

"Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 44/103 and 45/177 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields,

"Bearing in mind also section IV of the annex to General Assembly resolution 45/264, which calls for a review of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council to be carried out at the forty-sixth session of the Assembly with the objective of possible restructuring and revitalization and with a view to avoiding duplication,

"Noting the steps already announced by the Secretary-General regarding the restructuring of the Secretariat in order to respond effectively to the challenges facing it,

"Noting also General Assembly resolution 46/235,

"Recalling Committee of the Whole resolution 419(PLEN.14) on the rationalization of the institutional structure and the pattern of meetings of the ECLAC system, and resolution 489(PLEN.19) on the intergovernmental structure and functions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

"Re-emphasizing its conviction that the activities entrusted to the Commission by Economic and Social Council resolution 106 (VI) are fully consistent with the development efforts of its member countries, within the broader context of a revitalized programme of the United Nations in the economic and social fields,

"1. Expresses its appreciation for the effective work performed by the Commission and for its significant contribution to economic thinking and to Latin American and Caribbean development efforts in both the analytical and operational fields and in the realm of intraregional and international economic cooperation;

"2. Expresses its conviction that the restructuring and revitalization process under way in the economic and social fields of the United Nations should accord due consideration to the usefulness of the regional, multi-disciplinary and multisectoral approach which has characterized the work of the Commission;

"3. Recommends that the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields being currently undertaken by the General Assembly consider the desirability of:

"(a) Increased decentralization in the execution of activities in the new organizational structure which is being created, based on the concept that the endeavours of the Organization at these fields can be carried out more efficiently and effectively at the field level on a regional and subregional basis;

"(b) Improved coordination and Secretariat-wide coherence by reinforcing the activities of the regional commissions aimed at mutually supporting the activities of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in their respective regions through, inter alia, intensifying joint activities and emphasizing joint programming exercises and meetings;

"(c) A clear division of responsibilities regarding regional technical cooperation activities between the regional commissions on the one hand and the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund on the other, in particular by requesting coordination prior to the submission of regional projects and activities to Governments;

"(d) Improved effectiveness of the technical cooperation activities provided by the United Nations to countries - through the intermediary of the regular programme of technical cooperation - by decentralizing more of the resources allotted to the Commission under section 12 of the budget and by strengthening its capacity as an agency responsible for executing operational activities and technical cooperation projects at the regional level in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the Commission, by virtue of its programme of work, is in a better position to take action;

"4. Expresses the conviction that the simplicity of the intergovernmental structure of the ECLAC system (which includes ILPES and CELADE) and the procedure of holding meetings of the Commission in biennial sessions have proved to be effective in meeting the objectives of the Commission;

"5. Decides to transmit this resolution, together with the relevant section of the report of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission and, as a background paper, the document entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: role and functions of ECLAC" (LC/G.1716(SES.24/18)) to the intergovernmental bodies which are currently charged with the restructuring exercise "

The relevant portions of the discussions in Committee I are available in the biennial report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (E/1992/35, Supplement No. 15).

174. Economic Commission for Africa: at the twenty-seventh session of the Commission/Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers, the Commission adopted ECA resolution 728 (XXVII) entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: strengthening the role and functions of the regional commissions". The full text of this resolution appears in section I.A of the present report. Another important resolution, which is relevant for the present in-depth discussion, was adopted by the Ministers and is entitled "Strengthening ECA to face Africa's development challenges of the 1990s". The text of this resolution also appears in section I.A above.

175. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: as indicated already, ESCWA unfortunately had to postpone its session to August of this year and will only then be able to address the matter and respond properly to the request contained in General Assembly resolution 46/235.

176. The responses made by the regional commissions to General Assembly resolution 46/235 should not detract from the fact that regional commissions have, over the past five years, themselves undertaken reviews and adopted resolutions to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in response to General Assembly initiatives to restructure and revitalize the economic and social sectors of the United Nations.

177. Last year, the Economic and Social Council adopted decision 1991/302 on "Convening of an ad hoc meeting of high-level experts on the revision of the mandate of the regional commissions", thereby endorsing ECA's resolution 718 (XXVI) on "Revitalization of the mandate and operational framework of the regional commission for Africa". Owing to the restructuring efforts of the first phase already under implementation, it has not been possible to convene this ad hoc meeting of high-level experts before the current session of the Economic and Social Council. The Commission at its twenty-seventh session/Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers also adopted a Final Declaration, which deals, inter alia, with matters of priority setting, the conference structure, the role of the MULPOCs, coordination issues, and environment issues, and reaffirmed the continuing validity of the regional commissions as important organs of the United Nations for promoting socio-economic development in various regions of the world.

178. The Economic Commission for Europe, at its forty-fifth session in 1990 adopted resolution 0 (45) entitled "The activities of the Economic Commission for Europe", in which the Commission decided on five priority areas of activity, and on broad outlines of work in sectors not identified as priorities. It agreed on a certain number of adjustments to the methods of work and structures of its subsidiary bodies.

179. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its forty-seventh session in 1991 adopted resolution 47/3 entitled "Restructuring the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission", which endorsed the recommendations made by the ESCAP Group of Eminent Persons relating to the progressive reorganization of the work of the Commission on a thematic basis, that is, the setting up of three thematic committees.

180. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its nineteenth session of the Committee of the Whole in 1987 adopted resolution 489(PLEN.19) entitled "Intergovernmental structure and functions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean".

181. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its fifteenth session in 1989 adopted resolution 175 (XV) entitled "Strengthening of the role and performance of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia".